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TWO IRISH PLAYS

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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TWO IRISH PLAYS

MOUNTAIN DEW

A Play in Three Acts

&

CARTNEY AND KEVNEY

A Comedy in Three Acts

By

GEORGE SHIELS

Author of
" Professor Tim " and
" Paul Twyning "

MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
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"Mountain Dew" was first produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, on March 5th, 1929, with the following cast:—

HENRY MOYLEN	Michael J. Dolan
MRS. MOYLEN	May Craig
ANNA MOYLEN	Eileen Crowe
TESSIE MOYLEN	May Bonass
MIKE DUDDY	Barry Fitzgerald
MRS. DUDDY	Maureen Delany
KATE DUDDY	Hindle Mallard
BRIAN MULVENNA	F. J. McCormick
MARK MALONE	P. J. Carolan
TWO POLICEMEN	T. Moran, J. Winter

The play produced by Arthur Shiels

MOUNTAIN DEW

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

CHARACTERS

HENRY MOYLEN	*An Old Stiller*
MRS. MOYLEN	*His Wife*
TESSIE MOYLEN ANNA MOYLEN	*Daughters*
MIKE DUDDY	*A Farmer*
MRS. DUDDY	*His Mother*
KATE DUDDY	*His Sister*
BRIAN MULVENNA	*A Bank Robber*
MARK MALONE	*A Motor-driver*
TWO POLICEMEN	

ACT I: MOYLEN'S *kitchen*
ACT II: MOYLEN'S *sitting-room*
ACT III: *The same*

Six months elapse between Acts I and II
A few days between Acts II and III

TIME: 1922-23

ACT I

Scene: HENRY MOYLEN'S *back kitchen, used sometimes as a still-house. At the back are two small square windows like gaol windows, and a door leading to the farmyard. Another door on the right leads to a passage that connects with the main dwelling-house.*

The open fireplace, with an iron crane to swing a twenty-gallon still, is on the left. The furniture is primitive and scanty.

It is a dark night in November 1922.

TESSIE *is preparing a meal of eggs and bacon and tea. She is twenty-eight years old, with strong black hair and swarthy complexion.*

MRS. MOYLEN *comes in at the right—a fussy woman around sixty years of age.*

MRS. MOYLEN. Tessie, who are you making the meat for?

TESS. For Brian Mulvenna. He's perched on the mountain-side since before dusk.

MRS. M. For all sakes be careful letting him in and out. Mike Duddy's up in the room talking to Anna, and he says sure enough

Brian Mulvenna was in the bank raid yesterday. Six or seven thousand pounds was taken.

TESS. Go back to the room and tell Mike Duddy he's an infamous liar! Or I'll soon tell him. . . . Brian Mulvenna was not in the bank raid; as well say I was in it.

MRS. M. Well, dear, don't flare up. If even so he was in it—can himself and his people starve? Many a decent man is driven to it these times.

TESS. No decent man is ever driven to steal at no time.

MRS. M. Well, dear, maybe not. [*Sniffing*] This place smells of potheen. Was your father in here?

TESS. Yes, he was. He carried the old still outside, to hide it. If you touch it it stinks for a week. . . . Burn another piece of that old rag.

MRS. M. [*putting a rag in the fire*]. For all sakes, Tessie, don't let Anna smell potheen or she'll go wild mad. . . . Oh, I wish from my heart she'd stayed in America!

TESS. If she'd written itself to say she was coming home—she and her " surprise visit."

MRS. M. Don't say a word, Tessie. Our hand's in the dog's mouth . . .

TESS. Aye, to the elbow!

MRS. M. . . . and we must slip it out as easy as possible. We must hide all from Anna. Maybe she'll not stay long.

TESS. Go you out and shut the yard gate. Brian's coming in. He's starving with hunger.

MRS. M. [*pausing at the door*]. Tessie dear, you know how badly we need money. Your father's fine—two hundred pounds—must be paid to-morrow morning, or they'll gaol him.

TESS. Go on and shut the gate. Brian Mulvenna has no money to give away.

MRS. M. 'Twould be no harm, Tessie, to take a few hundred pounds and we needing it so cruel.

TESS. Go on, I say, and shut the gate! Or I'll pitch this meal in the fire and go off to bed.

MRS. M. Well, dear, I'll say no more. I'll shut the gate and then go round by the front door . . .

TESS. And keep Anna—and everyone else—up in the room. Don't let them come down here to annoy me.

MRS. M. All right, dear. [*She goes out, back.*]

ANNA *comes in at the right. She is two years older than* TESS, *but looks younger and happier. She has been ten years in America.*

ANNA. Say, Tess, what are you doing back here in this old kitchen all by yourself? We've got a dandy turf fire in the sitting-room, and Mike Duddy's been telling us hair-raising stories.

TESS. I'm making something to eat.

ANNA. But who's going to eat it? I thought

we'd all fed up an hour ago. Don't you folks do nothing all day long but eat? I'm only eight hours home and I've eaten four meals, plus several drinks of milk.

TESS. This meal's for someone else.

ANNA. Tess, you don't mean to up and say there's a man after you? Gee, I'd love to see him with his arms round you—to see if you'd smile. Is he young, Tess? Or is he another old bird like Mike Duddy?

TESS. There's no man after me at all, Anna. This lad's on the run, and I'm making him a bite to eat.

ANNA. On the run? Wanted, you mean, eh?

TESS. Yes. Aren't they all wanted now?

ANNA. Now look at here, Tess. I hope I'm a pretty good Irishwoman myself. I'd like to see Ireland the first gem of the sea, and her enemies tramped flat in the mud. But I'm home for a quiet holiday and don't want to get shot. I hope that don't sound too selfish or unpatriotic.

TESS. There's no danger at all.

ANNA. What I'm hinting at, Tess: I don't want young men on the run hiding under my bed to've the military poke 'em out with bayonets while I'm having my beauty sleep. Do you get me?

TESS. There's no fear of that, Anna.

ANNA. Coming home to-day from the station we met half a dozen motor-wagons full

of noisy troops with guns and bayonets, and they didn't seem too sober or respectable.

TESS. They never interfere with us. They keep out on the main roads.

ANNA. But Mike Duddy's after saying that nearly every house in this glen's been raided and searched for arms.

TESS. Ach, him! Who'd heed Mike Duddy —that old gasbag! I tell you our house has never been raided at all. Why should it be? Isn't father too old to use a gun, and we've no brothers?

ANNA. And who's this bird you're making the ham and eggs for?

TESS. A neighbour boy he is, an all right boy, too. He's leaving here to-night, anyhow.

ANNA. Mike Duddy's been telling us about a bank raid in town yesterday. Someone name Mulvenna from the next glen was in it. It ain't him you're feeding, is it?

TESS. Not likely. I don't feed bank robbers.

ANNA. I'm glad to hear you say that, Tess. For bank robbers and patriots are two different birds. One's a noble bird, and the other's a bird of prey.

TESS. I wouldn't give a bank robber time to say his prayers. They've disgraced Ireland.

ANNA. Good gel. . . . That makes my holiday look a lot brighter. I'll go back now and join Mike Duddy's entertainment. [*Sniffing*] Gee, I smell old liquor or something.

TESS. It's that old greasy rag burning. Mother threw it in the fire.

ANNA. But I smell the rag, plus something stronger. [*Sniffs*] Like bad old whiskey. . . . [*Seriously*] Tess, I hope daddy has no truck with stilling. Has he?

TESS. Not he. He's in too poor health to care about anything.

ANNA. Nothing else matters, so long as he ain't stilling. [*Going*] Now, Tess, don't be isolating yourself here all night. Remember sister Anna's crossed the Atlantic to see you.

TESS. All right, Anna. I'll be with you in a few minutes. ANNA *goes, right.*

TESS *sets a light in the window and then puts the meal on the table.* BRIAN *comes in, back. He is a vigorous type of man around thirty years of age.*

BRIAN. Heavens, Tessie, I thought you'd let your lamp go out—like one of the foolish virgins. [*Rubbing his hands to warm them*] I've been sitting on the top-shelf of that mountain for hours.

TESS. I couldn't bring you in a moment sooner. Will you wash your hands?

BRIAN. Thanks, I washed them at the pump and dried them on the hay-stack. [*Sits down to the meal.*]

TESS [*pouring tea*]. Anna arrived home today from America.

BRIAN. You don't mean it?

TESS. Walked in and never said she was coming. And, Brian, it's placed us in an awful fix.

BRIAN. How so, Tessie?

TESS. Well, as you know, father was fined in two hundred pounds for stilling. They gave him three months to pay the fine or go to gaol. The last day for paying is to-morrow and he hasn't the money.

BRIAN. That's bad. Has he no money at all?

TESS. Not a penny. And if Anna gets wind of it she'll pack up and go away. Before she went to America she made him swear on his knees to give up stilling, but you might as well ask him to give up his heart's blood.

BRIAN. They never give it up, Tessie. Stilling's an hereditary disease—like poaching.

TESS. Bad luck to it—from my heart out! Anna has sent home a bag of money, and where has it gone to? Mostly to pay big fines. We've got nothing to show for it. The farm's growing wild, and we've only two cows instead of four, and fifty miserable sheep on the mountain instead of three hundred. . . . I'm ashamed to look Anna in the face.

BRIAN. Sure, you can't help it, Tessie. You're not your father's keeper. Henry Moylen'd still whiskey if you and Anna were sleeping in the churchyard.

TESS. You wouldn't know father. He's aged

twenty years in the last few weeks. A feeble old man he is, and if he has to go to gaol he'll die in it.

BRIAN. We mustn't let him go to gaol. We must try and raise the money. . . .

TESS. Raise the money? Where'd you raise two hundred pounds? They say you were in the bank raid yesterday, but I know it's a lie.

BRIAN [*eats in silence*]. I'll tell you about that in a minute, Tessie . . . when I've done eating.

TESS. You'll tell it now, Brian. For if I thought 'twas true I wouldn't give you time to finish the meal.

BRIAN [*rising*]. At that rate I won't ask time to finish it. I won't eat your food under false pretences.

TESS. Brian! were you engaged in that dirty work?

BRIAN. Yes. I did it.

TESS. You soiled your hands—and your good name—in a thing like that? I don't believe it.

BRIAN. It's true.

TESS. My God! has it come to this? Brian Mulvenna—the only clean man of the lot—steals money like a Black and Tan or a burglar!

BRIAN. Would you let your father go to gaol? I wanted money for two objects. One was to pay your father's fine, the other was to

keep my own people alive. I was hunted out of work a year ago, and I haven't slept a night in a bed since. . . . Well, there's a limit to Irish patience. I walked into the bank yesterday and took what I wanted. When it's done I'll go back for more.

TESS. Six or seven thousand pounds they say . . .

BRIAN. I don't know the amount. I hadn't time to count it. There was lots of loose money lying around and I filled a bag with it. [*Pause.*] Now, will you let me pay the father's fine, or not?

TESS. Sit down and finish your meal.

BRIAN. Thanks. [*Sits.*] You can think it over, Tessie. I'm leaving these parts to-night. . . .

TESS. Where are you going?

BRIAN. That depends on where I can get. I'd like to quit Ireland to-night and never see her again, never hear of her again.

TESS. Have some more tea. [*Filling his cup*] Of course, you must leave the country. If you were caught now you'd get twenty years.

BRIAN. Will you come along, Tessie?

TESS. Me? Where to?

BRIAN. Anywhere. America, Australia, Canada—anywhere. This country has no future—at least this part of it. They're dug in here for another hundred years—the last refuge of ignorance and stupidity and slavery.

TESS. Ireland was all right three days ago, Brian. It's yourself has changed in the meantime. When a decent Irishman commits a crime he starts blaming the country. . . .

BRIAN. Ah, hell! quit talking like a copybook. . . . Can a man live on mountain-air and keep the Commandments? If they won't let us work in our own country, like human beings, I'm going to rob and steal. An Englishman or a Scotchman wouldn't stand for it. Is the fool Irishman to let himself be plundered and bulldozed from the cradle to the grave and remain a saint? I'll be damned if I stand for it.

TESS. Well, I hope yourself and your bag of money will get safe out of the country; and I hope you'll never come back.

BRIAN. No fear of that. I'll be too glad to away. [*Rising*] At that rate, you're not coming . . . ?

TESS. Run away with a man and a bag of stolen money? Brian, what do you take me for?

BRIAN. You know the circumstances. You know I'm neither a Black and Tan nor a burglar. You're taking a moral stand because you're afraid to take a chance. If you cared a damn for me you'd pat me on the back and follow me to the far corner of the earth.

TESS. I was born in this glen and I'll die in it. I see no future for a thief. . . .

BRIAN. Well, that settles it. I hope you'll marry some meek Moses who'll turn the other cheek to every viper that wants to smite him. From this night forth I'll use my teeth and claws.

TESS. Brian, take care! You're not safe out of this country yet. I'd an ugly dream about you the other night. I saw you laid out on this floor, and you bleeding like a sheep.

BRIAN. 'Twas the other fellow you seen laid out, not me at all. [*Buttoning his coat*] I'm going down the glen now to get Mark Malone's car . . .

TESS. To get Mark Malone into trouble next?

BRIAN. You're very particular about Mark Malone . . .

TESS. And why not? Didn't I know Mark Malone before I knew you?

BRIAN. Are you trying to make me jealous? You needn't. I'm not jealous at all. You'll never marry Mark Malone, nor any of his kidney. If you don't marry me you'll marry no man.

TESS. I won't marry a highwayman, anyhow.

BRIAN. If you don't marry me you'll marry that black mountain behind the house and die cursing it. . . . Let me out, please.

TESS. Where are you taking Mark Malone to?

BRIAN. That's private. I'm going to a certain place to get the money. With luck I should be back in half an hour. I'll come in here and lay enough money on that table to pay your father's fine.

TESS. You won't! I'd let father go to gaol first.

BRIAN. You're very keen on letting other people go to gaol, or die with hunger on the hillside. But your father mayn't be so keen. I'll pay the old man's fine, whether you like it or not.

TESS. I say you won't. Mike Duddy's in the room at this moment; he may be able to lend father the money.

BRIAN. What? Mike Duddy with two hundred pounds? Why, the man couldn't raise as many pennies.

TESS. If he can't raise the money himself, he can speak to Captain Gawson—they're friendly—and get father another month to pay it in.

BRIAN. Well, yes. Duddy might do that. He and old Gawson are pretty thick. Some of us'd like to investigate the roots of that queer friendship.

TESS. What do you mean, Brian? Do you think Mike Duddy's giving old Gawson political information?

BRIAN. Never mind what I think. I'm quitting here anyhow. . . . And, by the way, old Gawson's lying in the jaws of death with

pneumonia. [*Going*] I hope the jaws close on him quickly—the ould rip!

TESS. Is that true, Brian? Is Captain Gawson ill?

BRIAN. Ill? He's dying. Doctors racing back and forth all day.

TESS. Good Lord, another door closed! [*Pause*] Brian, you may come back and give me some money.

BRIAN. Now you're talking . . .

TESS. Whisht, Brian! you're caught. Go out, I'll follow you. [*She bundles him out and goes after him.*]

HENRY *comes in, right. He is a frail old man, with a troubled face and a perpetual whine on his lips.*

HENRY. There's no one here, Michael. You may come in. We can talk here in privy. Come in. . . . Ah, dear me!

DUDDY *comes in. He is a ruddy-faced old fellow around seventy years of age, with white hair and moustache, but as agile as a schoolboy. He wears an old leather vest without sleeves, and a hairy cap.*

DUDDY. Who's been eating here, Henry?

HENRY. Och! Tessie feeds many a one in here. Can she let the boys go hungry . . . ?

DUDDY. Well, it's not safe. She should leave the mait out on a flat stone in the orchard-garden.

HENRY. Sit down, Michael. I want to speak to you. I think in my heart I'm going to die. The fear of gaol's killing me.

DUDDY. Have you not got the fine-money yet?

HENRY. Ah, dear me! Where'd I get the fine-money? Two hundred pounds.

DUDDY. Have you no stuff made?

HENRY. About twenty gallon. But what is that agen a fine of two hundred pounds? I meant to run forty gallon this night—but Anna walked in on us. . . . Ah, dear me! [*He takes a small bottle from his pocket and drinks*] Will you have a sup of this? It's not good.

DUDDY. Sup it up yourself.

HENRY. I'll finish it, for I'm not well. [*He drinks*] Ah, dear me!

DUDDY. What about Anna? She looks like a young woman with plenty of money. Look at the dress of her, and the shoes she has on her feet. Isn't she in good sarvice?

HENRY. Anna has no money at all. How could Anna have money? Doesn't she send it home as fast as she earns it? . . . And if she'd money itself dare I mention the fine? 'Twould kill her dead. . . . Ah, dear me! I wish she hadn't come home at this time; not but I'm glad to see her face after ten years.

DUDDY. Glad? I'm as glad as you, Henry. For hang me if I ever seen a girl like Anna

Moylen walking the solid earth. . . . Lord, I wish I'd a head of black curly hair!

HENRY. Ah, dear me! Will you stop fool talking, Michael Duddy, and listen to me? What am I to do agen to-morrow? If I can't pay the fine they'll gaol me. Could you lend me the money on the farm, Michael? I'll pay you seven or eight per cent.

DUDDY. Am I like a man'd have two hundred pounds to lend out at seven or eight per cent? Am I like a man'd have ready tuppence?

HENRY. If you haven't the money yourself couldn't you borrow it? Lord, after the years we've had dealings, would you let me go to gaol?

DUDDY. Where'd I borrow all that money? Is there ten pounds of ready money in the nine glens? Sure the bank owns the glens and everybody in them.

HENRY. And will you let me go to gaol? To die in gaol and be buried in the gaol-yard?

DUDDY. You'll not be buried in the gaol-yard if I can help it. I'll try and get you another month to raise the money. . . .

HENRY. If I couldn't rise the money in the last three months, how will I rise it in the next month?

DUDDY. Sell the bit of land.

HENRY. Ah, dear me! Sell the bit of land? sell the bit of land to pay a fine. . . . ?

DUDDY. Or go to goal. Mightn't you as

well sell the bit of land as sink it for all eternity with a mortgage?

HENRY. Would they gimme an extension, Michael? If you'd slip up to Dunmore House and lay the case before Captain Gawson . . .

DUDDY. Amn't I only coming down from Dunmore? The Captain's bad and dying with pneumonia. They wouldn't let me upstairs to see him, after him sending for me.

HENRY. Michael, I'm lost!

DUDDY. Don't cry lost yet. I'll try and see the Captain to-morrow morning. If he scribbles a note to the police they'll give you another month to pay, or maybe two.

HENRY. Well, well! I wish from my heart I'd never run a drop of still-whiskey. Here I'm at seventy years of age, my farm gone to the dogs, and I going to gaol to die. . . .

DUDDY. You say you've twenty gallons made. If you could run forty more . . .

HENRY. Man, are you here to torture me! Dare I light a still fire and Anna here? . . . Ah, dear me!

TESS *comes in, back, and clears the table.*

DUDDY. Who were you feeding, Tessie?

TESS. I didn't ask the name.

DUDDY. Prudent, Tessie. Was it a man or a woman?

TESS. I didn't look closely. It might be either.

HENRY. Tessie, go up to the room to your

mother and Anna. I want to speak to Michael in privy.

DUDDY. Stop where you are, Tessie. Your father's said all I want to hear in privy. I'll be going home in a jiffy, anyhow, for my mother and Kate are alone.

MRS. MOYLEN *comes in, right.*

MRS. M. Tessie, go up to the room and sit with Anna. I want to speak to your father and Mike in privy.

TESS. Good Lord! [*Going*] Don't be long till you come up, or you'll have Anna down here. [*Goes out, right.*]

MRS. M. Mike dear, isn't this a hoult? Anna walked in and never said she was coming.

DUDDY. She took a bad time for it, Catherine, surely. But I'm going to see Captain Gawson and get Henry another month to raise the fine-money.

MRS. M. Ah, Mike, is that all you can do for us? And the ould Captain ill in bed. . . . Could you not give poor Henry the money yourself on the farm? The people says you've a stocking of money.

DUDDY. I wish the people'd tell me where I keep it. I'd like to see the colour of that stocking.

MRS. M. Then is poor Henry to go to gaol? And Anna here. If he is 'twill kill us all.

DUDDY. Trust to luck, Catherine. Ould stillers have some narrow escapes.

MRS. M. Never mention stilling before Anna. Never breathe the word. For she thinks —poor girl!—that her father gave it up ten years ago.

HENRY. Ah, dear me! I wish I had.

MRS. M. Oh, it's too late to be wishing that now! It's like an ould sinner on his deathbed wishing he'd lived a good life.

HENRY [*rising*]. Well, listen to me—you and Michael Duddy. They won't take me to gaol. I'd die in it anyhow, and I can die before they take me. I'm seventy years old and my life is behind me, so why should I pay them two hundred pounds for all the little time I'll be living? I'll never pay them a penny, nor I won't go to gaol either!

MRS. M. Henry dear, don't excite yourself. And don't talk wild. You can't afford to lose your poor sowl in the end. Isn't Paradise cheap at two hundred pounds, even if we have to borrow the money?

HENRY. I doubt if any man that stilled whiskey will ever see the face of God but in wrath.

MRS. M. Now you're only exciting yourself unnecessary. There's no harm in stilling if you're not caught. It's the British Government, not God Almighty, you're offending. . . . Isn't that so, Mike Duddy? Speak to him, Mike.

DUDDY. Sit down, Moylen, and don't be

talking like a Plymouth Rock preacher. There's been whiskey stilled in these glens since before the British, and 'twill be stilled after them. Is there a word in Holy Writ again it? Sorra a word. If it's no sin to've a big brewery it's none to've a wee still. Let the British go to the devil. The Almighty's not an English excise man.

HENRY. Michael Duddy, that's wild talk from you—a man as old in years as myself. Let me tell you your sowl's not in a healthy condition any more than my own. But if you take example by me you'll curse it and quit it. For it brings no blessing in this world nor in the next. You and I've seen a generation of ould stillers pass away. And how did they die? Like dogs in a kennel. And what did they leave behind them? Not enough to bury their bones.

DUDDY. Will you stop whining? You never get into a hoult but you start preaching like the Apostle Paul. If the fine-money was paid you'd have the ould still working before bedtime.

MRS. M. Sit down, Henry dear. The Lord'll turn up some means of paying your fine.

HENRY. Ah, dear me! The Lord to help in paying a fine for potheen. . . . [*Sits.*] Woman, I wouldn't have the face to ask it and I sure I'd get it. . . .

ANNA *comes in.*

ANNA. Say, what's the idea of you folks

leaving the room to sit down here? This old kitchen looks and smells like the far corner of a gaol.

MRS. M. The men like to sit down here of a night, Anna. . . . Mike Duddy, isn't our Anna looking remarkable well?

DUDDY. Remarkable . . . beauuutiful! Lord, I wish I'd a head of black curly hair!

ANNA. What would you do, Mike? Adopt me?

DUDDY. I'd be setting the hat for you.

ANNA. About what age are you, Mike?

DUDDY. I don't know. We don't go by years in this glen. My mother's ninety-five and as smart as a bee. She can speel up the mountain like an ould brocky sheep; and calling the dogs her voice can be heard nine miles.

ANNA. And your sister Kate. Is she older than you?

DUDDY. I don't know. She's Kate Duddy for as far as I can look back. I think she's oulder than her own mother.

ANNA. By gosh, after all there's a lot to be said for the glens! Ninety-five and as smart as a bee. [*Sits.*] Daddy, why are you so quiet and gloomy?

HENRY. I'm not well, Anna.

MRS. M. He hasn't been well for a long time, Anna.

ANNA. Have you seen a doctor, daddy?

HENRY. Not yet, Anna.

MRS. M. Och, he's not that bad, Anna!

ANNA. We'll call in a doctor to-morrow. It's always best to be sure. . . . Do you remember, daddy, how ill you was before I went away?

HENRY. I do, Anna. Rheumatic fever I had.

ANNA. Yes, you got it laying out on the wet mountain.

HENRY [*startled*]. Would that do it now?

ANNA. Sure thing, daddy. 'Twas the wet and cold. . . . If you'd followed up stilling you wouldn't be here to-night. . . . Would he, mammy?

MRS. M. He would not, dear. But from the time you made him swear the oath he never looked back.

ANNA. Ain't you grateful to me, daddy, for making you stop it?

HENRY. I . . . I am, Anna.

ANNA. There couldn't be no luck follow it. Gosh, I used to see mere kids laying stupid drunk in this glen! Boys and gels of fifteen laid out side by side. The wonder to me is the glen ain't full of illegitimate children. In America the glen wouldn't have held 'em.

MRS. M. My goodness, Anna, that's terrifying talk in front of your father and mother and a strange man.

ANNA. But true, ain't it?

MRS. M. But, dear, you shouldn't come out with it. It's very far from nice.

ANNA. If it's part of the scenery why not mention it? If I get a chance I'm going to use my camera!

MRS. M. Oh, there's none of that now, Anna. There isn't a still working in the whole glen. Ask Mike Duddy himself. . . .

DUDDY. Too many police, Anna. There's six police for every civilian. [*Whistles a bar.*] No. We've no stilling round here now, thank goodness!

HENRY [*jumps up*]. Ah, dear me! Such a thing to be saying . . . Listen, Anna, I'll tell ye all . . .

MRS. M. [*pulling him down*]. Afore Heaven, Henry Moylen, I think your head's cracked! Sit down quiet and give the girl a mouthful of peace, after she crossing the stormy ocean to see us.

ANNA. What was you going to say, daddy?

MRS. M. Nonsense, Anna! He's always harping about the evils of stilling and the sins of the people.

ANNA. What was it, daddy?

HENRY [*catching his wife's eye*]. Nothing, Anna. Nothing at all.

MRS. M. Mike Duddy, give Anna a verse of a song. It must be a long time since she heard a nice Irish song.

ANNA. Sure thing, Mike. A nice old come-all-ye. And here's Tess. . . .

TESS *comes in, right.*

MRS. M. Quiet, Tessie. Mike Duddy's going to sing a nice come-all-ye for Anna. . . . Now, Mike, turn on the water.

DUDDY [*rising*]. I will, by the blazes! . . . And maybe Henry could help me with the chorus.

MRS. M. Go on, Mike. There's nothing to hinder us all to sing. God's good.

ANNA. Got "The Hills of Donegal," Mike?

MRS. M. He has, he has. Now, Mike, there isn't a singer like you in the nine glens. Quiet, everybody.

DUDDY *sings "The Hills of Donegal."* ANNA *and* MRS. MOYLEN *assist him. They are nearing the end when his mother and sister burst in at the back. The* OLD LADY *wears a home-made cardigan and a little shawl on her head.* KATE *has a rough cardigan but no head-shawl.*

OLD LADY [*in a shrill voice*]. I think so, b'my sowl! He's singing to the nabors like a mavish. There isn't much singing in your own house, Michael Duddy, you profligate boy you. . . . That we can't get a word outa you from Monda' morning to Saturda' night but a snarl like a dog. . . .

MRS. M. Take Anna up to the room, Tessie. Take her away!

TESS. Come on, Anna. [*She hustles her out, right.*]

KATE [*prompting her*]. Ma, that's the Yankee. That's Anna home from Bosting.

OLD LADY. Aye well, if there's a strange gerril in the glen he'll be smelling at her heels.

DUDDY. I'll be going, Henry . . .

OLD LADY. What's taking you out that way, Michael Duddy? Come out the back door and step home in front av me.

DUDDY. I'll be home before you. [*He goes, right.*]

OLD LADY. You're not the first, Catherine Moylen, has set a snare for my foolish boy. But I'll take care he doesn't put his head in it.

Kate [*prompting*]. The fine, Ma. The big fine. The morra's the day.

OLD LADY. Aye, sowl. You maybe have him here to relieve a hoult. But he'll pay no fines for a Moylen. Let every stiller pay his own fine or lie in gaol for it. [*To* HENRY] You'll not be the first Moylen that wore the yellow stripes and had a number on his back. . . .

MRS. M. [*rising*]. Molly Duddy, there's the door that you and your hatchet-faced daughter come in by! Walk out sharp before I lift the iron tongs. Mind, you're talking to Catherine O'Hara of the Conny Hill—not to a mongrel woman of the glens. If you think anyone here is after your ould mummy of a son you're

making a weighty mistake. It's the pension he's due for instead of a wife. Step on, now, before I forget you're a hundred years of age.

OLD LADY [*giving* KATE *shawl*]. Hould my head-shawl, Kate. Hould it tight in your hands. I'll let Cassie O'Hara of the Conny Hill—and her brother Ned gaoled for stealing sheep off the mountain in God's daylight —I'll let her see if I'm a hundred years of age! [*She rolls up her sleeves.*]

KATE. Come away, ma! Come away. Don't disgrace yourself by giving battle to the scum of the O'Haras. . . . [*She gets the* OLD LADY *dragged out, back.*]

MRS. M. Lord, Henry, that was a near nick! If Anna had stayed another minute she'd have heard all.

HENRY. Ah, dear me! Won't she hear all anyhow? Won't she see me marched off to gaol to-morrow morning with my hands tied behind my back? . . .

MRS. M. Will you stop harping about gaol and listen to me? Tessie had Brian Mulvenna in here to-night.

HENRY. She fed somebody . . .

MRS. M. 'Twas Brian she fed. And sure he emptied the bank yesterday—six or seven thousand pounds.

HENRY. Ah, dear me! [*Rising*] Catherine, we're getting worse and worse. Yesterday 'twas stilling. To-day it's sharing in bank

plunder. To-morrow 'twill be murder. There's no bottom to the pit of darkness.

MRS. M. Henry Moylen, standing there talking like a judge and lecturing everyone around you, one'd think you weren't to blame at all. One'd think you were the victim instead of the culprit, and that Tessie and I were the stillers. Let me hear no more preaching or whining! Your wife and daughters have kept you all your life, and you peddling potheen about the mountain—rotting your body and destroying your soul.

HENRY. I never shared in stolen plunder, anyhow. That's another step downward. . . .

MRS. M. You prepared the way for it. You and your stilling are the cause of all our woes. It has poisoned our lives. Listen to the batch of lies I'm after telling Anna—that you never stilled a drop since she left us, and you breaking your oath before she'd her foot on the boat. Lies that the Lord Himself has barely the power to forgive me.

HENRY. Why, then, don't you tell the truth and take the consequences? Are you more afraid of Anna than you are of God?

MRS. M. He sees all. He sees I'm only trying to make the best of your bad job. It isn't for myself I'm sinning; it's to screen you and save my daughter. . . . So no more whining now. For I'm determined that your fine will be paid to-morrow morning—if I've to go out

and steal the money myself—and Anna will never hear of the disgrace.

HENRY. Ah, dear me! [*Sits.*] Well, Catherine, do as you like. I'll not open my mouth again. If the fine is paid, well and good; if not, I won't complain. Maybe six months on a stone bed would be good for my sowl.

DUDDY *comes in, right.*

DUDDY. Are the hags away?

MRS. M. They're off, Mike. But I had to show them both the door. Your mother had her head-shawl off to fight. . . .

DUDDY. That'll please her. That's what keeps her young. Herself and Kate snarl and fight from morning to night, but that's only for practice.

MRS. M. Sure I know there's no real bad in your mother, nor in poor Kate either. But they have to be called to order once in a while.

TESS *comes in, right, followed by* ANNA.

TESS [*startled*]. I hear shooting! [*She opens back door and listens*] Yes, I do. . . .

ANNA. Well, for goodness sake, Tess, come in and shut the door! I don't want to hear no shooting. . . .

TESS [*closing the door*]. It's down the glen road—down about the chapel.

DUDDY. I don't like it. They're combing the glens for Brian Mulvenna.

ANNA. Sit down, Tess. You get on my nerves.

TESS. I'd rather stand, Anna.

ANNA. If this is the sort of atmosphere you folks live in, I'm going to make a short holiday. This sort of thing would drive me crazy.

MRS. M. It's been like this for over two years, Anna. Weeks and weeks that I never closed an eye at night. But the boys are nearly all interned now.

TESS. I hear a car coming. [*Listens*] Yes, I do. . . . [*She is going to the door*]

ANNA. Tess, will you for Heaven's sake let the door stay shut? We've got no cars out, have we? What's the idea of standing in the doorway looking for trouble?

TESS [*looking round*]. It's stopped at our gate.

ANNA. Well, let it stop there. If they want anything let 'em come and knock.

TESS [*listening*]. Someone coming in. . . . [*Shrugs.*] I'll open the door!

She opens the back door and MARK MALONE *half carries in* BRIAN.

MARK. Isn't there a sort of Yankee nurse here?

ANNA. You bet. I can give first aid. What's the trouble?

MARK. This man's got a bullet in him.

DUDDY *slips out, right.*

ANNA. Lay him flat on the floor and fetch the lamp.

MARK. Haven't you got a bed?

TESS. Yes—my bed. Bring him on, Mark. I'll go and light a light. [*She goes to the room.*]

BRIAN *tries to speak.*

MARK [*bending his ear*]. What is it, Brian? The bag? That's all right. We'll see to it. [*To the others*] There's a bag of his in the car. . . .

MRS. M. I'll go out for it, Mark. [*She goes, back.*]

ANNA. Let's hurry and get him to bed. He looks awful bad.

TESS *in the doorway with a lighted candle.*

TESS. Bring him on, Mark. The bed's ready.

ANNA *helps* MARK *to get* BRIAN *to the room.*

HENRY. Ah, dear me! One trouble never comes alone. He may die on our hands. [*He takes out his little bottle and drains it again.*] Dear me! . . .

MARK *comes in.*

MARK. I must get my car away from the gate. Where's Mrs. Moylen?

HENRY. She was out. She's coming in.

MRS. MOYLEN *comes in.*

MRS. M. There's no bag in the car, Mark. Not that I could see.

MARK. It's bound to be there, for I saw Brian with a bag on his knee. Come on. I'll have another look. If it's there you can bring it in and give it to Tessie. . . . I must get my car away out of that.

He and MRS. MOYLEN *go out, back.*

HENRY. Ah, dear me!

TESS [*off*]. Mother!

HENRY. She's gone out. After the bag she's gone.

TESS [*in the doorway*]. Is Mark Malone gone out with her?

HENRY. He is so. D'ye want him? He's in a hurry to get his car away from the gate.

TESS. That's all right. I don't want him.

HENRY. Your mother says there's no bag in the car . . .

TESS. No bag? Brian says 'twas there. [*Looks round*] Where's Mike Duddy?

HENRY. He went out. He went out when Mark and Brian came in.

TESS. Ah, then Mike Duddy has . . . [*She goes back to the room.*]

HENRY. Ah, dear me! There'll be trouble over this bag. The devil has many a way of doing his work. . . .

MRS. MOYLEN *comes in, back.*

MRS. M. What are you talking about?

HENRY. I'm saying nothing at all. There's nothing left for me to say.

MRS. M. The whole money was in the car, and someone has taken the bag—as sure as God rules in heaven!

HENRY. I know nothing about it. Nor do I envy the man or woman that took it, for 'twill bring them to a bad end.

MRS. M. When did Mike Duddy go out? I didn't see him go out at all.

HENRY. He went out immediately after Mark and Brian came in. A wise man was Michael Duddy to keep his hand clear of it.

MRS. M. By which door did he go out, back or front?

HENRY. By the front door he went, for I saw him going.

MRS. M. Then he didn't pass the motor-car at all. Then Mark Malone must have hidden the bag before he came in. . . . Wasn't the whole breed of the Malones barefaced thieves!

HENRY. And hadn't Mark Malone as good a right to the bag as anyone else?

MRS. M. Lord above, thousands upon thousands! And to think of us in our cruel need missing it by inches! 'Twould have been no sin for Tessie to have the money and she having a kindness for Brian.

HENRY. Ah, dear me! That's queer doctrine.

MRS. M. [*fiercely*]. It's no wonder you're

sitting there as poor as Lazarus! You never made a shift like another man to get a start in the world. . . . You and your little dribble of potheen—that wouldn't be worth a pound note in a whole week after you paid the brown sugar and treacle. . . . [*Going*] I'll go out now and have another look for the bag of banknotes. . . . It's maybe lying on the ground where his feet dragged it out of the car. [*She opens back door and leaps in again.*] Police, Henry! Police in the yard. . . .

HENRY. Ah, dear me! Tell Anna . . .

MRS. M. O Merciful Father . . . we're ruined! [*Goes, right.*]

HENRY. Worse and worse, and worse to come. . . . Ah, dear me!

ANNA *and* TESS *come in.*

ANNA. I'll try and bluff 'em.

There is a loud knock at the back door.

TESS. Who's there?

VOICE. Police!

ANNA. Well, the door's on the latch.

Two nondescript military POLICEMEN *come in. Both are armed.*

1ST POLICEMAN. You've got a wounded man here.

ANNA. No, sir. You're at the wrong number.

2ND POLICEMAN. It's a blinkin' lie!

ANNA. Thanks. You could have said that without being nasty.

1ST P. Look out. We're going to search the house.

ANNA. No, you ain't! [*She plants herself between him and the room door.*]

2ND P. Pull her outa that! A blinkin', snivellin' Yankee!

ANNA. Before you start hauling me around, I want to tell you something. I'm an American citizen, not an Irish serf. I did some military work in war-time. You can see my passport and papers. So you'd better not kick me around like old shoes or you might be sorry.

2ND P. Then come out of it! We're hardly going to let you stop us. We wouldn't let the whole blinkin' American Army stop us!

ANNA. You let 'em stop the Germans.

2ND P. Aye, with their mouths. Seven days in France.

ANNA. They did more in seven days than your crowd did in four years. . . .

2ND P. Ah, hell! come outa that. . . .

He pulls at ANNA, *who holds on to the door-handle.*

ANNA. You darned rowdy—this is your job!

2ND P. And it's your job to hide a bank robber.

ANNA. Eh? What did you say? A bank robber?

2ND P. Aye, a bank robber . . . Mulvenna . . . didn't we plug him down the glen a few minutes ago?

ANNA [*standing aside*]. There you are. He's in the room. It certainly ain't my job to hide a bank robber.

1ST P. The little Yank's all right. Come on.

He and 2ND POLICEMAN *go to the room.*

ANNA. Tess, did you know he was a bank robber?

TESS. No.

ANNA. Well, he won't rob no more banks. He's unconscious anyhow, so moving him won't hurt. . . . I'll go in and lend a hand.

TESS. Where did mother go, Anna?

ANNA. She made a bee-line for the sitting-room.

TESS. I hope she stays there. . . . And listen, Anna, if they ask who brought him here, let me answer them. Don't mention Mark Malone's name.

ANNA. Right. You do the talking.

The POLICEMEN *appear in the doorway.*

1ST P. He's our man all right. Who brought him here?

TESS. We don't know. We were all sitting up in the room and heard a noise like moaning. When we came down here he was lying on the floor.

2ND P. Who dressed his wound?

ANNA. I did. I'd dress yours, too, if necessary.

2ND P. Had he a bag or a parcel?

ANNA. No, sir. Not a scrap.

1ST P. You're sure about that?

ANNA. You bet. No baggage.

2ND P. Come on, we'll shift the blighter. The sooner we get him to a doctor the better.

They both go back to the room.

TESS. Anna, we'll go and give a hand to carry him out to the car. They might hurt him.

ANNA. I gave him some dope. He'll never know how it happened.

She and TESS *go to the room.*

HENRY. Ah, dear me! The Lord help us—poor worms that we are. . . . I wish I'd never seen the All-beholding Eye of day. [*He takes out his little bottle and drains it again.*] Ah, dear me!

The POLICE *carry* BRIAN *in on a sheet and go out, back, followed by* TESS *and* ANNA.

There they go with him. Dying maybe without priest or friar. . . . Risking his life for stolen money, and losing his life and the money too.

MRS. MOYLEN *and* DUDDY *come in, right.*

MRS. M. Henry dear, this is a woeful calamity. Mike Duddy was in the sitting-room all the time. He says he never left the house.

DUDDY. Sure I knew they'd follow the car. Mark Malone had no sense to bring him here at all. He might have got the house burnt over your heads. . . . Henry, man, you're not looking well.

HENRY. How could I be looking well? Isn't the powers of Darkness crushing me down?. . .

MRS. M. Mike and I've been talking up in the room, Henry. He's going to lend us the fine-money.

HENRY. Michael! Old friend!

DUDDY. Could I see you going to gaol, to be buried in the gaol-yard? Not if it cost me the last spoon on the dresser.

HENRY [*rising*]. Old friend! Gimme your hand, Michael. [*Shaking*] God reward you. I knew you'd prove staunch in the end.

MRS. M. He's taking a mortgage of three hundred pounds on the farm, Henry. That'll pay your fine and give us a bit of ready money to keep up a good appearance before Anna.

HENRY. It will so.

MRS. M. Mike's taken a great fancy for Anna, Henry, and you and I'll do all in our power for him. He's not as poor as he lets on to the world, and a wise man he was to keep his affairs to himself.

HENRY. I always knew Michael had a stocking, for he was a careful boy.

MRS. M. If he buys a fine farm, he'd be a better match for Anna than a younger man maybe.

HENRY. He'd be a perfect match for Anna. [*To* DUDDY] I'll do all in my power for you, Michael.

DUDDY. I know you will, Henry. And if money and a fine farm can do it, I'll win her.

HENRY. The weight of a mountain has rolled off my heart. Glory be to God! [*He goes out, back.*]

DUDDY. If I win Anna, I'll tear up the mortgage, and make you a present into the bargain.

MRS. M. If you don't win Anna, 'twon't be my fault.

ANNA *and* TESS *come in with the sheet.*

ANNA. Come on up to the room, you folks. As long as I'm here—which mayn't be long—I won't put my foot again in this old kitchen. It's like a Dago joint in the Bowery. [*She goes, right.*]

TESS [*pausing behind* ANNA]. I heard the police saying that Captain Gawson's dead.

MRS. M. My God . . . the ould bigot! We don't need him now, anyway. Mike's going to lend us the fine-money.

TESS. Ah! Is that so now?

DUDDY. Could I let my oldest friend and neighbour go to gaol?

TESS. Ah . . . thanks, Mike. Thanks. [*She follows* ANNA.]

DUDDY. Captain Gawson dead! [*Whistles a bar.*] Bad thing this ammonia. [*Whistles.*] Dunmore House and land 'ill be in the market before a week. It's mortgaged to the hilt. . . . Not a word, Catherine. As I said before, if money and a fine farm can win Anna, she's mine.

HENRY *opens the back door and carries in a still and a still-head. He is flushed with excitement.*

MRS. M. Afore Heaven—there's he with the still!

HENRY. Get out of here, woman, and leave me alone. Am I to be trampled upon by my wife and children? . . .

MRS. M. Mike dear, speak to him. He'll maybe heed you. . . .

DUDDY. Let him alone, Catherine. He's twenty gallon made, and the stuff ready for forty more. Let him make it.

HENRY. Away and give me peace, I tell you, or I'll do something wicked.

MRS. M. Come on, Mike dear. Come on up to the room and sit with Anna.

She and DUDDY *go out, right.*

HENRY [*shouts after them*]. Mind, if you let Anna catch me at this you can take the consequences. For I'd run a still this night if you and your daughters were in the arms of death! [*He puts on his specs. and starts tinkering at the still.*]

Curtain

ACT II

Six months later. The best room in MOYLEN'S *house. The door on the right leads to the hall, and that on the left to a room. Anna's trunk, suitcase, and attaché are in the centre of the room.*

HENRY, *looking more aged and feeble, is sitting on a stiff-backed chair with his gaze fixed on the trunk. His hands are resting on a thick hazel stick.*

HENRY. Ah, dear me! . . . A trunk always reminds me of a coffin. . . .

ANNA *comes in, right, with an armful of things for the trunk. She is partly dressed for going away.*

ANNA. Well, daddy, are you still here?

HENRY. Still here, Anna. I was just saying to myself that a trunk always reminds me of a—oh, well, no matter.

ANNA [*raising the lid*]. Yes, and it also feels like a—oh, well, no matter.

HENRY. Could you not put off going away for another month, Anna? Something might happen in another month.

ANNA. No, daddy. I've got to be in Boston at the 1st of June or lose my job. And this is the twenty-third of May, so I've cut it pretty fine. . . . The other girls must have a holiday, too, you know.

HENRY. Well, it's hard, Anna, and me not well.

ANNA. Now, daddy, please don't make it any harder. It's hard enough for my taste right now.

HENRY. Ah, dear me!

ANNA. I've spun it out pretty well, haven't I? Over six months home.

HENRY. I wish you hadn't stayed so long.

ANNA. Same here, daddy. I've been home too long. The old ties have had time to re-knit.

HENRY. You needn't break them again, Anna, unless you like.

ANNA. Now, daddy, I know what you're hinting at. But it can't be done. I'd go a long way to be with you and mammy, but there's a limit. Mike Duddy's a decent old chap enough, but he's too old.

HENRY. Michael Duddy will never be old.

ANNA. He'll certainly hide the footprints as long as he can, and longer than most of us. But, for all that, he's got the bunch of years on his head—seventy at least.

HENRY. He's been like a good brother to me. Since my health failed, Michael's done everything for me.

ANNA. Yes, I know. He's been good to you and mammy. That's why I like him and respect him. But that's all I can do for him. Mike's too old a man for me—too old by a long way.

HENRY. There's nothing old about Michael but his age. Look at his mother and sister. . . .

ANNA. Now, daddy, have a little sense. You don't expect a girl who knows her way around to take on a domestic proposition like Mike Duddy and his mother and Kate.

HENRY. You're the first girl Michael Duddy has ever set his heart upon. He rocked you in the cradle in this very room.

ANNA. And he was an old man then. And that ain't yesterday. Now, for goodness sake, daddy, drop it. It gets on my nerves.

HENRY. Ah, well, I'll say no more.

ANNA. Darn it all, I've got to unpack. . . . [*She takes a pile of folded things from the trunk.*] The skirt I want's at the very bottom.

HENRY [*coughs*]. Ah, dear me! I wish, Anna, you could send me a bottle of good medicine for this cough. There must be some fine medicine in America.

ANNA. That cough ain't dangerous. But once I get back I'll send you some tablets for your heart.

HENRY. Is my heart very bad, Anna?

ANNA. No, it ain't too bad. The doctor says your heart may wear out the rest of you.

HENRY. That's good news anyway. I'll maybe live to see your face again, Anna.

ANNA. Ah, daddy, don't pile it on. I'll come back and see you next summer.

HENRY. Will you, Anna?

ANNA. I sure will, if I'm spared. And meantime I'll send home lots of money to get you everything you want.

HENRY. That contents a body, anyway. [*Rising unsteadily*] Ah, dear me! I'm dizzy, Anna. I'm always a bit dizzy in the morning. The room running round me. [*He sits down again.*]

ANNA. That's from the stomach. You'll be all right, if you take care. But don't forget you're pretty ill, and you ain't as young as you were.

HENRY. That's true, Anna. I must take great care of myself. For what would they do here if anything happened to me? . . .

ANNA. I'm going upstairs now. . . . I've forgotten a little hand mirror.

HENRY. Don't be long away, Anna. I like to have you all to myself.

ANNA. I won't be a minute. [*Goes out, right.*]

HENRY. Next summer! Ah, dear me! . . . I know where I'll be next summer . . . with the worms.

MRS. MOYLEN *comes in.*

MRS. M. No sign of the car yet. That's Mark

Malone for you. Him and his three-pound motor-car! I wish we'd sent to the town for a proper car.

HENRY. Mark's a neighbour.

MRS. M. Are you taking his part? What will you say if Anna misses the boat?

HENRY. What will I say? I'll go down on my knees and thank Almighty God. That's what I'll say.

MRS. M. Afore Heaven, Henry Moylen, I think your head's cracked. Don't you know that Anna's got another cablegraf to be in Boston at the first of June or lose her good post? . . .

HENRY. What do I care about good posts, or cablegrafs, or Boston itself? I want Anna.

MRS. M. Don't we all want Anna? Haven't I cried my heart out on the pillow every night for a week? Wait till Anna walks out that door—then you'll hear crying. I'll let you hear what real crying is. The screeches of me will be heard at the foot of the glen.

HENRY. You'll see her again, I never will.

MRS. M. What nonsense you talk! You'll see her again and again, with the help of God. Isn't she coming home next summer and bringing me a new silk dress in the American style?

HENRY. Ah, dear me! I know where I'll be next summer. [*Pause.*] I wouldn't complain' Catherine, but I'm feeling not well. My hearts, like an ould clock that would be running down.

MRS. M. It's the excitement . . . and the smoking. Sure you smoke like a furnace. 'Twill go away.

HENRY. Maybe 'twill . . . if it doesn't take me with it.

MRS. M. [*pointing left*]. Go in there and lay yourself out on the chair-bed. 'Twill rest you.

HENRY. Let me sit where I am. Anna told me to sit where I am.

TESS *comes in, blinking.*

MRS. M. What do you want, Tessie?

TESS. Nothing. [*She stands gazing at the trunk.*]

MRS. M. Did you feed the calves?

TESS. No.

MRS. M. Nor put out the cows?

TESS. No.

MRS. M. Are they milked yet itself?

TESS. No.

MRS. M. Afore Heaven, Tessie Moylen, I think your head's cracked! Ten o'clock in the day and nothing done.

TESS. We've all day to work after Anna goes. [*Pause.*] An open trunk always reminds me of an open grave.

MRS. M. Tessie, will you for all sakes go and hide yourself in the kitchen, and not put me wrong? Your father's not well. . . .

HENRY. I'm well enough.

TESS. You don't look well. You should go in and lie down on the chair-bed. [*She goes out.*]

HENRY. Now, Catherine, that was a great shame for you, telling her I'm not well, and she bursting already.

MRS. M. Oh, she'll over it! She's young. [*She lays hold of a duster*] I'll keep myself busy. I'm all right if my hands are employed. [*She starts fussing about the room, doing nothing.*]

HENRY. Anna's staying a long time upstairs.

MRS. M. Will you stop talking about Anna? Get Anna out of your mind altogether, like I do. That's the only way to baffle it.

TESS *comes in with a glass of whiskey.*

TESS. Hurry and drink it, father. . . . Don't let Anna smell it.

HENRY [*grabbing the glass*]. Och, Tessie! [*Gulps it.*] Ah, dear me . . . that's helped me already.

TESS. Put that peppermint in your mouth.

HENRY. Och, Tessie dear! . . . You're as good as ten of a family. I'm not so bad when I've you left.

TESS. Where's Anna?

HENRY. She went upstairs, she said, for a little hand looking-glass.

TESS. I'm making her a cup of tea. . . .

MRS. M. Is there no sign of Mark Malone's car yet?

TESS. It isn't time yet. Anna told him last night what time to be here.

MRS. M. But couldn't he have come an hour or two before the appointed time, in fear we might want him for something? Why'd he be leaving it all to the last minute! . . .

TESS [*going*]. Like the hearse, he'll be here time enough. [*She meets* ANNA *in the doorway.*] Have you broken it, Anna? My God, have you broken a looking-glass?

ANNA [*comes in a few steps*]. Have a little sense, Tess. It was cracked in America. . . .

TESS. 'Twasn't cracked this morning—sure I had it in my hand.

ANNA. For goodness sake, don't be superstitious. We smash those things in America like biscuits and never think. [*In an undertone*] Don't raise a howl.

TESS. Come with me a minute. [*She takes* ANNA *out.*]

HENRY. Ah, dear me! . . . Breaking a looking-glass and she starting out to cross the seas!

MRS. M. [*almost on the nerves*]. Afore Heaven, Henry Moylen, I think your head's cracked! Didn't you hear her saying 'twas broken in America? And what signifies it, anyhow? I used to pay attention to them things, but I've learned common sense. I'd smash a looking-

glass every hour in the day and never give it a thought. . . .

TESS *in the doorway.*

TESS. There's that ould pest—Duddy—coming; and dressed up like a clown.

MRS. M. Ah, God pity us all this morning! I thought she'd get away without seeing him.

TESS. If I was Anna I'd take the boiling kettle and roast him!

MRS. M. Now, Tessie dear, be wise. Our hand's in the dog's mouth and we must work it out as easy as possible. Go and tell Anna. Maybe we'll be able to shift him.

TESS. I'd shift him—with the boiling water. [*She goes.*]

MRS. M. Now what, in God's name, does Mike Duddy want here this morning?

HENRY. He wants Anna. And I wish from my heart she'd have him. She'd be safer here—married to a decent farmer—than to be away in them godless cities, a single woman.

MRS. M. Well, Henry, we needn't talk, for she wouldn't entertain him at no price. And why will he come at the last minute pestering her! . . . I hope he doesn't mention the mortgage.

HENRY. Michael wouldn't do a thing like that. But if I thought 'twould change her mind I'd mention it myself.

MRS. M. For Heaven's sake, man, is your

head cracked? If you breathed the word mortgage to Anna she'd go off like a shot and never put pen to paper again.

DUDDY *comes in. He wears new shoes, new stockings, new knickers, new sports coat, and his hair and moustache are dyed pink.*

DUDDY [*sees the trunk*]. Ah, wirra, wirra!

HENRY. Your heart's as sore as our own, Michael.

MRS. M. And that's sore enough, God knows.

DUDDY. My heart's torn in two with grief and woe. If that trunk goes down the glen today, I hope my funeral goes down after it!

MRS. M. Mike dear, say nothing rash.

DUDDY. I'm saying nothing rash. I don't want to enlarge on my condition. But if Anna Moylen sails away this day . . . [*He clenches his big fist.*] But she won't! No, she won't. No, for I'll stop her. By fair means or foul, I'll stop her!

MRS. M. Now, Mike dear, don't excite yourself. Henry and I've done all in our power for you. We've tried her in every shape and form, but all to no purpose.

HENRY. That's true, Michael. We've praised you—as you deserve to be praised—morning, noon, and night. But she wouldn't listen to us.

DUDDY. What has she against me? Does

she think I'm an old man? Look ye [*he leaps over the trunk and back*], am I a spent force, eh? There isn't a man in the Nine Glens, from eighteen to forty, that I couldn't race off his legs. One mile or twenty—it's all the same to me. . . . Where's Anna, till I speak to her? She's bound to listen to reason.

HENRY. Catherine, go and bring Anna here.

MRS. M. But, dear, at the last minute, it's a thousand pities to worry her.

DUDDY. Worry her? This is not a worry—it's life and death.

HENRY. Go on, Catherine. She never seen Michael dressed up as grand as this.

DUDDY. And listen to me, Catherine. Tell Anna I'm here to settle the match. Tell her I've moved heaven this morning and I'm here now to move the earth.

MRS. M. Whatever you do, Mike, don't cross her. [*She goes.*]

HENRY. From my heart, Michael, may you succeed.

DUDDY. I must succeed. I couldn't fail now if I tried. She's got into the very marrow of my bones.

HENRY. If you can stop her going, Michael, I'll bless you till my dying hour.

DUDDY. If I can't stop her you can—and you must. If nothing else can stop her, you must mention the mortgage.

HENRY. Ah, dear me! [*Pause.*] If all else fails, Michael, I'll do it.

DUDDY. Anna Moylen must be my wife. It's so written in the Book. I walked the mountain all last night, like a lost man, and my mind's made up. It's Anna Moylen for me, or destruction.

HENRY [*rising*]. I must lay down my head a minute, Michael. See, I'm staggery. . . . If you want me, I'm in the room on the chair-bed.

DUDDY. Yes, go and lie down. You don't look well, and we might have some excitement here.

HENRY. Ah, dear me! . . . [*Goes to the room.*]

DUDDY [*giving the trunk a kick*]. Bad luck to you, America, and all you possess! May some visitation of God come and sweep you off the face of the earth! [*He opens the attaché and takes out a passport.*] By the blazes, her passport! She can't go a step without it. [*Puts it in his pocket.*] All's fair in love and war.

ANNA *and* MRS. MOYLEN *come in.*

ANNA. Good morning, Mr. Duddy. Mammy says you want to see me.

DUDDY. Who are you "mistering"? Haven't you always called me Mike?

ANNA. I always liked to be friendly. I wish now I'd been a little more discreet.

DUDDY. It's too late to be discreet now. The damage is done. You've been nice and friendly too long to . . .

ANNA. Now, Mike, have a little sense. You've got no licence to bounce me like that. But I'll forgive you once if you don't repeat it. I've told you I like and respect you as an old neighbour, but that's the extent of it.

DUDDY. State your objections.

ANNA. I'd rather not.

DUDDY. State your objections, I say.

ANNA. I might only vex you.

DUDDY. State your objections, in the presence of your own mother. You can't vex me at all. I'm beyond the point of shame or modesty as regards myself.

ANNA. I hope you ain't beyond the point of decency. I'm making ready to start for America. You ought to consider what it means to drag myself away from daddy and mammy . . .

DUDDY. And sweetheart! What's all to that!

ANNA. But, Mike, you ain't my sweetheart.

DUDDY. But you're mine. You were the first and you'll be the last. Now state your objections.

ANNA. Mammy, will you leave us for two minutes? I want a few private words with Mike.

MRS. M. I'll go in here and see your father. [*Goes to room.*]

ANNA. Are you aware that daddy's in a poor way with his heart? With any excitement he might go out like a match.

DUDDY. Am I aware? Are you aware that I've sat up every night with daddy for two months and never had the clothes off my back? I only mention it because you ask me a foolish question.

ANNA. I know you've been very good, and that makes it all the harder for me. But I ain't going to let you or any other man bully me around like this. I wouldn't marry you if you were the last man on God's earth.

DUDDY. State your objections.

ANNA. Because you're an older man than daddy, and he's seventy.

DUDDY. You think I'm an old man, eh?

ANNA. I don't think at all—I'm sure.

DUDDY. A poor old withered rag of a man with white hair. . . .

ANNA. Dyed hair.

DUDDY. That's the style. Don't spare me. It's best to've this all over and done with. . . . An ould, stiff-jointed skeleton of a man, with one foot in the grave. . . .

ANNA. It's no shame to be old, unless one is foolish. That's all I want to say.

DUDDY. Look ye! [*He almost hits the ceiling with his toe*] Is that the kick of an ould man? Look ye again! [*He leaps over the trunk several times like a buck*] Is that the lep of an ould

man? . . . Watch out again. [*He dances an Irish jig and breaks into a sort of Highland fling.*]

ANNA *is fascinated by his speed.*

Eh, melady! Is that the dance of an ould man? Listen: d'ye hear any gasping or shortness of breath? [*Pounding his chest*] D'ye hear any bagpipes playing or wheezing in my chest? Not likely. But maybe you think I'm as weak as a cat. I'll let you see. [*He picks* ANNA *up like a kitten and carries her round the room.*] You see? That's the sort of an ould man Mike Duddy is. I could pick up that trunk in my teeth and carry it to Boston.

ANNA. I'll tell you what you are—you're crazy! If any other man had done that to me I'd slap his face.

DUDDY. And right you'd be. If I saw any other man doing it I'd pull the gills out of him. . . . Now, Anna, my heart, have you any more objections?

ANNA [*goes to room door*]. Mammy, please come here.

MRS. MOYLEN *comes in.*

MRS. M. What is it, dear?

ANNA. I want you to entertain Mr. Duddy. I'm going upstairs.

DUDDY [*stopping her*]. Not yet, Anna. You needn't dress up, nor pack up, for you're not going to America to-day.

MRS. M. Mike dear, you'll never win Anna —nor anyone else—in that fashion. I know you're a good hand with a colt, but a young girl is different.

DUDDY. Not a bit different. They've both got to be mastered. If they don't come with coaxing you fetch them by force.

TESS *in the doorway.*

TESS. Mark Malone is here with the car.

ANNA. Good. Send Mark in here, Tess.

DUDDY. We don't want Malone in here at all.

ANNA. Send Mark to me, Tess.

MARK *comes in.*

MARK. I'm here.

ANNA. I want you to stay here, Mark, till I go upstairs and dress. Mike Duddy will amuse you.

MARK. Right. Certainly.

DUDDY [*up to his face*]. There's no certainty about it! You'll stay here just if I like. D'ye hear?

ANNA. Easy now, Mark.

MARK. Mr. Duddy, I thought you and I were old friends.

DUDDY. Did you?

MARK. I did surely. Since I got the car you've gone out of your way to help me.

DUDDY. Well, I'd go out of my way now to twist your neck! D'ye hear?

ANNA. Easy now, Mark. Daddy's poorly in the room.

MARK. Duddy, what's biting you? Will you come outside and tell me what's biting you? I don't want to hit you in here. . . .

DUDDY. You don't want to hit me . . .?

MARK. No, I don't want to spill you all over the room. But if you come outside—there's a paddock and I won't keep you a minute.

DUDDY. Come on to the paddock! I know who'll leave it on a stretcher. . . . Come on to the paddock.

ANNA. Mark, do have a little sense! I want to catch the eleven train.

DUDDY [*to* ANNA]. Are you afraid now? Are you afraid he wouldn't be able to drive you to the station? You brought him in here to show off his red cheeks again' my dyed hair. . . . But I can take a shake out of five-and-twenty any day in the week. [*To* MARK] Come on to the paddock! We'll see who's who in the paddock. . . .

MARK. Come on, then! As sure as Heaven I'll beat the head off you. . . . [*He is taking his coat off.*]

ANNA. Mark—Mark Malone! Will you please go outside and wait till I call you? Please!

MARK [*shrugs*]. Well . . . all right. [*He goes out.*]

ANNA. Now, Mike Duddy, between old friends, ain't you going to cut this out? I've less than an hour to fix up and be at the station.

DUDDY. If you give me five clear minutes I'll table all my facts.

ANNA. Well, for Heaven's sake table 'em. And quick. I won't interrupt.

DUDDY. First and foremost, I've convinced you that I'm the youngest man in the Nine Glens. Well, next to that is the question of a home for you. My mother and sister are agreeable . . .

ANNA. Mike Duddy, you're crazy. I honestly think your head's turned.

DUDDY. If it is I know who turned it. . . . Will you let me table my facts?

ANNA. But you're only wasting time. Your mother and Kate are dear old women, but they don't want you to marry yet awhile.

DUDDY [*slaps his leg*]. I knew that was in your mind. But I'm here to correct it. My mother and Kate are dying about you, their eyes aching for a sight of you. D'you know why?

ANNA. No. Maybe God knows.

DUDDY. Because they know I'd put my foot on the next boat and follow you. They know I'd follow you over the cliffs of Dover. They know once I drive in my teeth I never let go my hold. D'ye hear? In short, they're agreeable.

ANNA. But I ain't.

DUDDY. Hold on a minute. Don't speak too quick. You don't know all yet. You think I'm asking you to share a whitewashed cottage with a straw roof. But you're mistaken. Do you know Dunmore House and lands? Eh? Thirty rooms and three hundred acres. Well, it's yours. [*He folds his arms.*]

MRS. M. Is that true, Mike?

DUDDY. True, Catherine. 'Twas a bit of a struggle to raise the money, but I did it for Anna. [*He offers* ANNA *a letter*] Read that, Anna.

ANNA. Thanks. I don't want to see it.

DUDDY. Well, your mother 'ill want to see it. Dunmore belonged to her forefathers, the O'Haras, who were hunted out of it by the rascally planters.

MRS. M. It's true, Mike. Dunmore was the ancestral home of the O'Haras. [*She takes the letter.*]

DUDDY. Take it in and read it to Henry. It's from the lawyers.

MRS. M. He'll be a proud man. [*Goes to the room.*]

ANNA [*locking her trunk*]. You've got the O'Hara tribe on your side now.

DUDDY. Your mother was always on my side. And so was your father. [*Going to her with outstretched hands*] Now, Anna, my heart, won't you surrender quietly? Mind you, I can be very soft as well as very hard. If you

give me a kind look I'll melt at your feet. But if you pull against me I'll drag you to pieces.

ANNA [*a little alarmed*]. Are you sure you ain't going crazy?

DUDDY. I don't know nor I don't care. All I know is that you must be mine, because it's so written in the Book. . . . Till I met you I didn't know a woman from a sheep.

ANNA. Had you no love affairs when you were young?

DUDDY. I'd no time for the like. I was more concerned with black-faced sheep. But the force was there all the time. Bottled up. And now you've turned it loose, and I'm in a dangerous condition.

ANNA. You only fancy you're bad. In hospital all the boys proposed to us in turn. But once they got out, we never heard of 'em again. Wait till you see, Mike. In ten days you'll have forgotten me.

DUDDY. Ah, heavenly Moses! Such talk. Listen ye: there's more love running wild through my system than's in all America. . . . Forget you in ten days? No, nor in ten thousand years.

ANNA. That's a long time to remember a girl.

DUDDY. It's not long enough for me to forget Anna Moylen. [*Extends his hands*] Now, sweetness: won't you surrender quietly?

ANNA. Just a moment. Mammy's coming in.

MRS. MOYLEN *comes in.*

MRS. M. Afore Heaven, Mr. Michael, you're now a gentleman! An estated gentleman. If I was Anna I'd have my hand in yours like the lightning. . . . Henry's coming in to pay his respects.

HENRY *comes into the doorway and stops there.*

HENRY. I'll come no farther, Michael. It's a great victory for the glen. You're not a farmer now, you're a Squire.

DUDDY. I'll ask you one question, Henry. Did I work hard and tight for anything I have?

HENRY. You were a model for us all. God send you long life and good health to enjoy yourself. . . . Come over and give me your hand.

DUDDY [*shaking hands*]. You'll never want a friend, Henry, while I'm to the fore.

HENRY. I know it, Michael. You've been a son to me already, as I've told Anna fifty times over.

MRS. M. Here's your letter, Mr. Michael. We're all proud of you. After hundreds of years Dunmore is back to the grand old stock. Oh, thanks to God, Who sees all.

HENRY. Amen, Catherine.

ANNA. Seriously, Mike: did you buy Dunmore for me?

DUDDY. And who else—under heaven—would I buy it for? I bought it—at seven thousand pounds—for you and your childer.

ANNA. Well, I'm sure sorry for you. And now, since it's gone so far, I'll tell you something. Your mother and Kate last Sunday morning waited for me outside the chapel gate . . .

DUDDY [*stunned*]. What! I never heard this before . . .

ANNA. No, I don't suppose you did. But you hear it now. They chased me for half a mile, making threats and raining down curses. . . .

DUDDY [*furious*]. No more of it! No more, I say! I'll see about it. . . . [*He dashes out.*]

MRS. M. Where, in God's name, is he off to? He's wild mad. I never seen as mad a man. . . . [*She runs out after him.*]

ANNA. I don't care one damn where he goes, so long as he quits here!

HENRY [*still in the room doorway*]. Anna dear, you were very severe on him.

ANNA. Now, daddy, don't make me cross. That was the most humiliating ordeal ever any girl was subjected to. It beat the Hindus.

HENRY. Many a fine girl would be proud to be mistress of Dunmore.

ANNA. Well, any fine girl that wants Dunmore can have it. I wouldn't share the Garden of Eden with that old lunatic.

HENRY. Anna dear, don't be too hasty. You know I'm under a great compliment to Michael Duddy, and me not well.

ANNA. I know he's been a good neighbour.

HENRY. He's been more than a good neighbour. You know, Anna dear, there's a bit of a mortgage . . .

ANNA. A what? A mortgage? On what?

HENRY. Ah, dear me! [*Trembling*] Now you're going to be vexed, and me not well.

ANNA. Has Mike Duddy a mortgage on this homestead? That's all I want to know.

HENRY. You know, Anna, I haven't been able to work.

ANNA. I know, daddy; but I've been sending home every cent I earned.

HENRY. You have, dear. You've sent home a power of money. But, the bad years, I got behind.

ANNA. How much does the mortgage amount to?

HENRY. Ah, dear me! . . . Three hundred pounds, Anna.

ANNA. Three hundred pounds! Fifteen hundred dollars—and I ain't got fifty dollars to my name. Daddy, this ain't fair to me. I ought to've been told about it.

HENRY. We didn't want . . . we didn't like . . . we were ashamed. [*He breaks down.*]

ANNA. There now: don't fret, daddy. Once I get back I'll wipe out the mortgage in no

time. [*Patting his arm*] You just slip back and lay down. And don't you worry. I'll fix it up.

HENRY. God bless you, Anna. You've been a dutiful child. Ah, dear me! . . . [*He goes to the room.*]

ANNA. Oh, what a shame to do this to me! What a mean, miserable shame! I've kept 'em for ten years. I've denied myself even a packet of candy. And then they'd do this to me . . . sell me like a sheep! [*She sits on trunk and weeps unrestrainedly.*] What a shame! [*She jumps up.*] They can't do this to me! It ain't fair. I won't stand for it.

MRS. MOYLEN *comes in.*

MRS. M. Are you crying, Anna?

ANNA. Yes, I am.

MRS. M. He's taken away the car.

ANNA. Who has? What car?

MRS. M. Mark Malone's car. Duddy has driven off with it.

ANNA. And where was Mark Malone?

MRS. M. He and Tessie were in the kitchen.

ANNA. Well, God Almighty! is this a bad dream, or am I going crazy? . . .

MRS. M. I believe Mike Duddy's gone to fetch his mother and sister.

ANNA. Stop it! I'll scream. . . . You people have treated me like a white slave. I've worked day and night to the strangers for ten

years, and sent home every cent I earned. I was ashamed to walk out with the other girls because my clothes were too shabby. And all that wasn't enough. You've taken a mortgage on the farm and never told me. It's a shame, mammy. A cruel shame. And now you'd sell me to old Duddy like a sheep. [*She bursts into tears again.*]

MRS. M. [*gasping*]. Did Duddy tell you about the mortgage?

ANNA. No, he's keeping that card up his sleeve. 'Twas daddy told me. I ought to've been told sooner. I could have stayed on at work and paid it off instead of spending money on this trip.

MRS. M. [*sniffing*]. We didn't want to tell you, dear. We thought we could have paid it off ourselves.

ANNA. How could people like you pay off anything? You can only get into a hole. You can never get out unless somebody drags you out.

MRS. M. Anna, them's hard words to your mother.

ANNA. They're true words. I'm thirty years old and I've never had a moment to think about myself. Every thought and every dollar was for you and daddy and home. . . . And then you'd turn round and do this to me. Oh, what a shame, mammy!

MRS. M. If you like we'll sell the bit of land

and pay Duddy off. Your father and me could get a wee house at a shilling a week, and Tessie could maybe find employment. We'll never ask you for another penny.

ANNA. Because you know you won't have to ask it. You never had to ask it. I'm aching now to get back to work and make this thing right. But you ought to've told me sooner.

MRS. M. Could you take Tessie back with you?

ANNA. She couldn't get to the States for two years. And she couldn't leave you and daddy, anyhow. That's the usual thing in a family like ours. One daughter's sacrificed abroad and the other is sacrificed at home.

MRS. M. It's God's will, Anna. If you'd had a brother he'd have been a big, sturdy fellow and could have worked the farm, and you and Tessie would be free. . . . Maybe your father and I'll not be a burden on you much longer.

ANNA. Now, mammy, that sort of talk—about a burden—only insults the injury. You know I'd give my eyes to make you and daddy happy. But you haven't treated me right. You should have told me about the mortgage. You should have written and told me before you took it on.

MRS. M. We didn't like to. You were always sending.

ANNA. That's what hurts. I was always

sending. You could always tell me when some trifling debt had to be paid. But you couldn't tell me about the most important thing of all. That's what galls me—that you could do this thing behind my back and not be ashamed of yourselves.

MRS. M. I see it now, Anna—as you see it. But I see it only for the first time. I didn't want to put the burden on a willing back. [*Sits down.*] My heart's broken, Anna. For that mortgage wasn't my fault. Nor Tessie's either. God knows it wasn't. . . .

ANNA [*going to her*]. Now, mammy, that's all over. Now that you understand my feelings I'm content. It was the thought of underhand work that cut me like a knife. [*Stroking her mother's hair*] I'll get right back to work, mammy, and wipe out the debt. Don't mention this to Tessie till I'm gone. We want no more tears or explanations.

MRS. M. Give me a kiss, Anna.

ANNA [*kisses her*]. Now, mammy! You run out and send Mark Malone to me. If he can't drive me to the station, he can carry some of this baggage and I'll carry the rest. I want to be out of here before that old looney comes back with his banshee mother and sister.

MRS. M. I feel happier than I've done for a long time. [*She goes out.*]

ANNA. O America! America! With all your faults and failings, God bless you! From this

moment till I die your ways are my ways and your people are my people. . . .

MARK *comes in, angry.*

MARK. Why didn't you let me hit him? The ould bitch has taken away my car. As sure as Heaven I'll pull the lungs out of him!

ANNA. Just a moment. Where were you when he was taking away your car?

MARK. I was in the kitchen with Tessie.

ANNA. Well, if you'd been attending to your job, it wouldn't have happened. It's a wonder somebody don't come along and steal this glen.

MARK. Wait till he comes back! I'll dye his hair for him another tint. . . .

ANNA. Listen here, young man. I didn't engage you to meet Mike Duddy in a twenty-round contest. I hired you to take me and my baggage to the station. Where's your car?

MARK. It's away . . . with the band.

ANNA. When will it be back?

MARK. I've no idea.

ANNA. Could you 'phone up somebody and get another car?

MARK. It's four miles to a 'phone.

ANNA [*looks at her watch*]. It's now a quarter past ten. Could you carry that trunk to the station in time to catch the eleven train?

MARK. No, I could not. It's seven miles to the station.

ANNA. How many miles is it by road to Derry Quay? I'm going to get that boat, or bust.

MARK. Sixty miles. I could do it in two hours.

ANNA. You might, if you'd a car. But if that old scrap-waggon of yours got hung up on the road, how then? Could you get another car?

MARK. That old scrap-waggon of mine could take you to Boston. She's done Derry scores of times—with half a ton of rifles.

ANNA. Well, hang on a moment. I should have a sailing notice here. [*She opens attaché and takes out a printed paper*] It's all right, Mark. The steamer don't sail till six o'clock to-night.

MARK. Good enough! If you miss the train we can go by road. Mountains of time.

ANNA. Oh, for Heaven's sake! . . . Where is my passport? [*Sits down on the trunk, limp.*]

MARK. What's wrong?

ANNA. My passport! It's been taken out of my case.

MARK. Was Duddy in here alone?

ANNA. Yes, he was. He was alone when mammy and I came in.

MARK. Well, it's like my car—if you'd been attending to your business. Tchee!

ANNA. Mark Malone, for God's sake don't laugh at me. I'm in a power of trouble. That

old Duddy has gone off his head. He may destroy my passport.

MARK. Couldn't you get another?

ANNA. It would take months. I'd have to apply to Washington.

MARK. Well, you may start applying. For Mike Duddy means to stop you. He's got you on the brain. Look at the fancy dress of him, like a walking pageant.

ANNA [*rising*]. Listen, Mark! Ain't you fond of our Tess?

MARK. I was—till I saw you.

ANNA. Why, good Lord! Are you another fool man?

MARK. You needn't get excited. I'm not a younger edition of Mike Duddy. That delapidated Ford is all I have in the world, and it often troubles me to pay the tax.

ANNA. That's why you always happened along when I was out for a walk?

MARK. That is so. I was always on the watch for you. Sitting in the old bus beside you was like sitting at the gates of heaven.

ANNA. Does Tess know?

MARK. Ah, Tessie doesn't care. You know I'm hardly a match for Tessie. Her father owns forty acres of land, and mine works at the steam-roller. There's about sixteen different castes in this glen, and by birth I belong to the meanest. The Malones never in all history owned a sheep, nor a cow, nor an

acre. A pig and a goat is all we ever had. . . .

ANNA. But you're the very thing my folks want to work this farm.

MARK. But I've got a little family pride, too. If it's only a mule they want to work the farm they can buy a mule in the fair.

ANNA. Well, look at here, Mark. If I was Tess I'd marry you so quick you'd never know how it happened.

MARK. I'd never ask how it happened, if it happened. [*Wistfully*] I wish you hadn't said that, Anna. This cemetery-glen's so lonely . . . I don't care now if you miss your boat or not.

ANNA. Oh yes you do, Mark. And you're going to help me. I want help pretty bad.

MARK. Well . . . tell us what to do.

ANNA. I want you to go out quietly and meet Mike Duddy coming back. Stop him and get my passport.

MARK. Right! I owe him one or two for taking away my car . . .

TESS *and* MRS. MOYLEN *come in.*

ANNA. Mammy, old Duddy's taken my passport.

MRS. M. He threatened to steal it or your ticket, but I didn't think he'd go so far.

MARK [*going*]. I'll put him from stealing Ford cars. . . .

TESS. Mark Malone, you'd better watch yourself. Mike Duddy doesn't like a bone in your body.

MARK. And, of course, I'm very fond of him. . . .

ANNA. Stop a moment, Mark. [*To* TESS] Say, Tess, ain't you and Mark Malone fond of each other?

MRS. M. Now, Anna, what sort of a question is that to ask Tessie? Mark Malone is hardly a match for your sister. . . .

MARK. I never said I was. I never flew the Malone kite so high. . . .

ANNA. Don't go away, Mark. [*To* TESS] Tess, I asked you a simple question. Mammy can speak later.

TESS. I like Mark well enough.

ANNA. Well, just hang on a moment. [*She goes to the room door*] Say, daddy! Could you come in here for one minute?

HENRY *comes in slowly and sits down.*

HENRY. Ah, dear me! . . . What's wrong, Anna?

ANNA. There ain't a thing wrong, daddy. I've seen a lot of Mark Malone since I came home, and I think him the finest boy in these parts. He and Tess are on friendly terms, and you want a young man around here pretty bad. Once I get back I'll raise enough money to wipe out the other thing, and the young

folks could start here on clear footing. Now, daddy! What do you say to that?

HENRY. What do I say to it? Just this, Anna. I'm far down in health, and far down in other ways, but I hope I'll never live to see a Malone in my house.

MRS. M. God bless you, Henry dear, for putting your foot down upon it once for all. If Tessie can't marry someone as good as ourselves she can go single to her grave.

MARK. The pig and the goat and the steam-roller! [*He goes out.*]

ANNA. Well, it ain't no wonder Ireland suffers from dry rot. The wonder to me is it don't dry up and blow away. . . . Tess! If I was in your shoes I'd marry Mark Malone this afternoon and sleep with him to-night in the old Ford. When these old folks drop off you won't get another chance, for no young man would have you. You'll be another Kate Duddy.

MARK. [*in the doorway*]. The car's coming. Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, are in it.

ANNA. Tess, you get my coat and hat. Go on. Rush!

TESS *goes out.*

MARK. What am I to do?

ANNA. Stay right here, Mark. If he don't hand out my passport, I'll tell you what to do —quick.

TESS *comes in with coat and hat.*

TESS. They're coming in, Anna . . . old woman and all.

ANNA [*putting on her coat*]. Let 'em come ahead.

DUDDY *pushes* OLD LADY *and* KATE *before him into the room.*

DUDDY. Now, Anna! Start where you left off . . . at the chapel gate.

OLD LADY [*in a shrill voice*]. We're agreeable. We're agreeable. . . . Kate and I are agreeable.

KATE. We are, Ma, we're agreeable.

DUDDY [*to* ANNA]. They don't mind seeing you at the chapel gate at all.

OLD LADY. Never! We deny all about it. We never set eyes on her. Ask Kate—that never tould a lie in her life.

KATE. We deny it. We never set eyes on her.

ANNA. Well, that's all right. You didn't have to come here to deny anything.

OLD LADY. But this boy of ours was blaming me and Kate in the wrong. If he wants to make a fool of himself and marry you, he's welcome. We're agreeable.

KATE. That's right, Ma. We're agreeable. Mike'll be the first to cry sorrow, but we're agreeable.

ANNA. Mark Malone! You take this baggage out and put it in the car.

MARK. Sure.

DUDDY. Hold on there, Malone!

OLD LADY. Hoho! This lady's not going to be aisy handled. But we're agreeable.

ANNA. Mark Malone, I told you what to do.

MARK! Right! [*He picks up suitcase.*]

DUDDY. Drop that bag, Malone! Or I'll drop you.

MARK [*drops the bag and takes hold of* DUDDY]. What the hell d'ye want? [*He backs him into a corner.*] Want me to punch the dyed head off you!

ANNA. My passport, Mark.

MARK. Hand out the passport—before I upend you!

DUDDY. All right. Let me go a minute. [MARK *lets go hold.* DUDDY *then necks him and shoots him out the door.*] If you come in here again—you beggar's heir you—I'll not leave a whole bone in your body! [*He bangs the door shut.*]

ANNA. Tess, you go and keep Mark Malone outside. We want no more trouble.

TESS *goes out.*

[*To* DUDDY] Now, you hand out my passport! Get a move on, or I'll slap your goldarned face!

OLD LADY. Hoho, she's a tartar! But we're agreeable.

KATE. She'll keep him in his place, Ma. But we're agreeable.

DUDDY [*staring at* ANNA]. You'll be sorry for this. You'll rue this day's work as long as you live. For you'll be my wife yet, in spite of God or man or devil. . . . There's your passport.

ANNA. Thanks. [*Puts passport in attaché.*]

DUDDY. I've a mortgage on this farm and I'll sell them up—every cup and every spoon—before a week!

HENRY [*weakly*]. Ah . . . dear . . . me! [*He sways from side to side, then falls off the chair.*]

MRS. M. Oh, Anna, Anna!

TESS *comes in.*

ANNA [*trying to raise him*]. Get up. Daddy . . . You'll be all right. Get up. [*She feels his pulse.*] Let's try and get him to bed.

DUDDY *stands by while* ANNA, MRS. MOYLEN, *and* TESS *get* HENRY *into the room.*

OLD LADY. Michael Duddy, come home with your own mother out of this house. For there's a curse upon it. There was always a blight upon the whole Moylen breed. . . . Come on, Kate. We'll go outside and breathe the pure air.

KATE. Aren't you coming home, Mike? For God's sake, come out of it and shake the dust off your shoes. Or mark my words, your story will be told with tears.

DUDDY. Go on home, the pair of you. I'll follow you in a minute.

OLD LADY *and* KATE *go out.*

ANNA *comes in.*

ANNA. Daddy's dead. [*She sits on the trunk.*]

DUDDY. Didn't I tell you, Anna, you'd be mine? I knew it, because 'twas written in the Book. And no man or woman can escape what's written in the Book. . . . Now, don't fret, Anna. I'll take full charge, and make all arrangements.

ANNA. Yes, you may. [*She takes off her coat and hat.*]

DUDDY. I'll be a father to you all. [*He kneels down to pray for* HENRY'S *departed spirit.*]

Curtain

ACT III

A few days after the funeral. Same scene as in Act II. A few candlesticks and other items suggest the recent wake.

TESS *is standing at the window reading a newspaper. She drops it as* ANNA *comes in with a teapot and cups on a tray.*

ANNA. Why, I thought mammy was here . . .

TESS. She's getting up.

ANNA. I've her tea here. . . .

MRS. M. [*from her room*]. I'm getting up, Anna.

ANNA. All right, mammy. [*To* TESS] What's in the paper, Tess? You look all rattled.

TESS. Oh, nothing. Some prisoners have broke gaol. I thought Brian Mulvenna might be one of them.

ANNA. Was he?

TESS. No. They're political prisoners.

ANNA. Why are you still interested in that robber?

TESS. He was a neighbour boy, Anna.

Twelve years' penal servitude is a terrible fate. . . . Twelve years. . . .

ANNA. It never pays to steal. Any boob knows that.

TESS. He went on hunger strike and his health has broken down.

ANNA. At that game the gaoler always wins.

MRS. MOYLEN *comes from the room, rubbing the sleep from her eyes.*

MRS. M. I've had a grand sleep, childer, and am feeling a lot more composeder. Had you a sleep, Anna?

ANNA. No, mammy. I was too busy trying to figure things out. . . . Sit down now and have a drink of tea. [*She hands round tea.*]

MRS. M. I slept like a stone.

ANNA. Well, after a good sleep is the time to discuss problems. We three women have got to settle on what we're going to do. I can't go away and leave you and Tess like this, and I can't stay here.

TESS. Could you take mother and me with you, Anna?

ANNA. I wouldn't, if I could. You'd like the States, Tess, but mammy'd wither away and die. Too old to take root.

MRS. M. For God's sake, Anna dear, never take me away from the glen.

ANNA. No frights, mammy. Before I'd see you caged up in a big city—or in anybody's

way—I'd stay here and work the farm with my own ten fingers.

TESS. If we worked here for a hundred years we wouldn't have Mike Duddy paid off. May God forgive father for leaving us in this plight.

MRS. M. Amen. Stilling whiskey was the ruin of us all.

ANNA. Now look at here. I won't hear another hard word about daddy. He'd his failings, poor old man, but I want to forget 'em.

MRS. M. But it's only fair to Tessie and me that you'd know the truth.

ANNA. Do you think I don't know all that already? Do you think I'm as simple as I try to look? Why, I saw all and knew all before I was a day home.

TESS. Did you know 'twas to raise money for us that Brian Mulvenna robbed the bank?

ANNA. I wasn't quite sure, Tess, but I guessed it. In a nasty case of that kind I never investigate. I let sleeping dogs lay.

TESS. Twelve years' penal servitude. . . . And Mike Duddy got the money . . . the old thief dog.

MRS. M. Tessie, for Heaven's sake mind what you're saying.

TESS. I know right well what I'm saying. Duddy stole the bag of money . . .

MRS. M. Will you whisht, Tessie? That's a terrible thing to say.

ANNA. Leave Tess alone, mammy. I want

to get the hang of this. I've a suspicion Mike Duddy ain't a self-made man. Go on, Tess.

TESS. He stole the money, Anna, six or seven thousand pounds, and 'twas that money he bought Dunmore estate with.

MRS. M. Tessie, you'll be sorry for this wild and dangerous talk. Couldn't Mark Malone as readily have stolen the bag . . . ?

TESS. Mark Malone wouldn't touch stolen money with a long pole. I know Mark too well. Sure he hasn't enough money to pay the tax on his car! Sure I'd to lend him a few shillings last week. [*To* ANNA] Mike Duddy's the thief, Anna. And what's more, he peddles in potheen. He buys it in dribbles from the stillers and sells it in the big cities at a profit. He robs the very stillers.

MRS. M. Mark me, Tessie Moylen, you'll rue this outburst. Mike Duddy—I know a lifetime—is a hard, decent man, and made his money with war sheep. . . .

TESS [*rising*]. I heard all that before. But we'd as many war sheep on the mountain as Mike Duddy, and we made no fortune . . . we bought no estates.

There is a noise from the farmyard.

MRS. M. [*rising*]. Tessie, what's that noise in the yard?

TESS. It's Mark Malone. He's feeding the calves and doing things about the yard.

MRS. M. God bless him, isn't he kindly!

ANNA. Mark's sure a good boy, but he ain't good enough for Tess. He's all right for doing chores.

MRS. M. Maybe himself and Tessie 'ill make a match of it yet. We're as poor now as himself. If you, Anna, could have married Mike Duddy, and Tessie, Mark Malone, I'd be a happy mother.

ANNA. Say, mammy, you slip out and send Mark Malone to me. I think I can see a streak of daylight.

MRS. M. Will I go for him, Tessie?

TESS. Yes . . . but say Anna wants him.

MRS. M. [*going*]. God knows, he's maybe as good as ever you'll get. [*She goes.*]

ANNA. Tess, I hate to do this. I hate those cold-blooded, home-made matches. But necessity has no law. For mammy's sake you must marry a man who can work the farm and keep the pot boiling. Ain't that right?

TESS. I don't mind about myself, Anna. But it isn't fair to Mark. I've no heart to give him. I'm only an empty shell.

ANNA. Nonsense, Tess. You'll grow fond of Mark in no time. After a few months they're all alike.

TESS. Well, speak to Mark yourself. I'll go into the room.

As TESS *goes to the room,* MARK *comes in*

ANNA. Have some tea, Mark?

MARK. Thanks, no tea. I'll nibble this piece of cake. I like fancy bread. [*He stands eating.*]

ANNA. Mammy's just after saying, Mark, that you and Tess might pull it off yet. Now daddy's gone, she'd have no objections.

MARK. Well, I'll think it over.

ANNA. At that rate you ain't very keen. But Tess is fond of you, Mark, and would make you a good wife.

MARK. She'd make a better sister-in-law.

ANNA. Now, Mark, have a little sense. A number of old maids are born every day. Old domestic drudges that can't be done without. That's my birthright.

MARK. To look after other people—and forget yourself—that's your birthright.

ANNA. Well, it ain't a bad mission. The majority of folks want a caretaker. Now, Mark, you'll marry Tess rightaway, then I can go back to work happy. . . . I'll be the old Yankee aunt, and send home little presents to my little nieces. [*Laughs.*] "Aunt Anna sent these balloons from Boston."

MARK [*pause*]. Do you remember telling me if you were Tessie you'd marry me so quick . . . ?

ANNA. You big boob, I was only joshing.

MARK. So that was all—fooling me you were? I thought you maybe liked me. . . .

ANNA. And I do, Mark. Like you a whole heap. And you like me, don't you?

MARK. I haven't the education to tell you . . .

ANNA. I know all about it. You like me so much you'd do any mortal thing to make me happy. Ain't that how you feel?

MARK. That's it. Any mortal thing, the bigger the better.

ANNA. Well, I want you to marry Tess and make a nice home here for her and mammy. These women are so helpless, Mark. But with you left in charge I could go away happy! Now, Mark, is that all settled?

TESS *comes from the room. She has been crying.*

TESS. You needn't, Anna. You needn't arrange anything for me. I can't do it. . . . I'll wait till something happens. I'll wait . . . if need be the twelve years. [*To* MARK] Tell her, Mark, what I mean. [*She goes out.*]

ANNA. What does she mean?

MARK. I suppose she means about herself and Brian Mulvenna. You see, Tessie and Brian and I were old political friends. We run guns together and had some narrow escapes. Tessie likes me and I like Tessie. But she'd rather have Brian Mulvenna's shadow on the ground than me soul and body. . . . And so'd you, Anna, if you'd known Brian.

ANNA. Gee, what an awful twist!

MARK. Listen, Anna. I could raise enough money to pay off Mike Duddy. But it isn't very clean money.

ANNA. Then, sonny, you can't touch it. A clean debt's better than dirty money.

MARK. I'm sorry now I spoke. You'll think I'm crooked. But the whole trouble is—I'm not crooked. I'll be going now.

ANNA. Where are you going?

MARK. I'm going down to the chapel, to pick up an old priest with the car.

ANNA. When will you be free?

MARK. In half an hour, maybe less.

ANNA. I'm going out for a walk, to do a little clear thinking. If I walk round to the White Rock, could you happen along and pick me up?

MARK. Now, Anna, you're fooling me again. . . .

ANNA. You come along and see. . . . Go on, now, and quit looking at me like a drove of sheep. [*She shows him to the door.*] Put up the hood, mind—or what's left of it. It might rain. [*She turns in.*] Gee, more trouble for Anna.

MARK [*in the doorway*]. Anna, for Heaven's sake. Mike Duddy's coming.

ANNA. Good! He's the very man I want to see. You fade away, Mark.

MARK *goes and* DUDDY *comes in. He has a black band on his arm for the late* HENRY.

DUDDY [*a little notebook in his hand*]. Now, Anna, my heart; listen to this programme.

To-morrow morning we'll go up to Dunmore House and see what repairs you want done. Then we'll call and see the priest.

ANNA. See the priest?

DUDDY. Mustn't we put down our names in the book? We can't get married without first putting down our names. Then we've furniture to buy, and repairs to get done, and a lot of odds and ends. . . . I've all down here in the book.

ANNA. I've got a programme, too. We'll attend to mine first. . . . And here's mammy.

MRS. MOYLEN *comes in.*

MRS. M. I don't want to be in the way, childer.

ANNA. You ain't in nobody's way, mammy.

DUDDY [*producing a ring*]. But I've got the ring here, Anna. Wouldn't we want to be alone?

ANNA. Mike Duddy, let's have done with this fooling. I believe in straight talking. Is it true that you annexed Brian Mulvenna's bag of money?

MRS. M. Anna!

DUDDY. Say that again!

ANNA. You heard me.

DUDDY. I don't understand. . . .

ANNA. Yes, you do. You can't make a mistake. I say you swiped Brian Mulvenna's bag of money. Ain't that clear?

MRS. M. Anna, are you mad!

DUDDY. By the tarnal God, if you were a man I'd put you down and never let you up. I'd tramp the life out of you!

ANNA. All bunk! You can't scare me. You took the money. You didn't have a rupee to pay daddy's fine till after Brian Mulvenna was carried in shot. Then you'd enough money to mortgage daddy and buy Dunmore.

MRS. M. Anna, for my sake stop it! Wasn't Mark Malone there too? . . .

DUDDY [*seizing the point*]. Haha! Mark Malone was there too. . . . And maybe Mrs. Moylen wasn't far away herself. [*Defiantly to* ANNA] Have you any proof that I got there first?

ANNA. Yes. Dunmore's the proof. This glen don't grow millionaires on white heather.

DUDDY [*grinds the ring under his heel*]. That's me engaged. [*He rips the black band off his arm*] And that's me out of black for ould toper Henry Moylen. [*To* ANNA] When you get a little more proof you can let me know. [*He is going out but meets* TESS *coming in.*]

TESS. Mark Malone and a priest are coming.

ANNA. Mike Duddy, you'd better stand your ground. I ain't finished with you yet. You can't bluff me. I'm going to 'ave the

bag-affair straightened out right now. If you run away I'll simply inform the police.

DUDDY [*turns in*]. I'm not running away. All the Malones and Moylens in the Nine Glens can't shift me an inch.

TESS. Don't spare him, Anna. As well as stealing the bag, he killed father.

DUDDY [*wild*]. I what? Say that again—ye bitch ye!

TESS. I will say it again. 'Twas the excitement that morning killed father, and 'twas you raised the excitement.

ANNA. Tess, that ain't correct. He's got enough to answer for without that. Don't be unjust. 'Twas my going away that excited daddy. He'd have slipped out that morning if Mike Duddy had been a hundred miles away.

DUDDY [*wiping his brow*]. Thank ye! thank ye! thank ye!

MRS. M. D'ye think, Anna, your father'd have died anyhow?

ANNA. I'm certain of it, mammy. And for you or Tess to lay the blame on a stranger is cruel.

DUDDY. Thank ye! Thank ye!

MARK *comes in.*

MARK. There's a priest here to see Mr. Duddy?

DUDDY. Where is he?

MARK. In the car at the door.

DUDDY. Well, let him sit there a minute. This is more important. [*Coming to* MARK] Have you been talking to these women, Malone?

MARK. What do you mean?

DUDDY. Now I knocked you down the other morning, and I'll knock you down again.

ANNA. No fighting, Mark. I've got Mike Duddy where I want him.

MARK. I don't even know what the man's talking about. . . .

BRIAN, *dressed as an old priest, comes in.*

BRIAN [*in a mellow voice*]. Is Mr. Duddy not here?

DUDDY. Yes, your reverence, I'm him.

BRIAN [*surveying him*]. I thought you were a much older man. You looked a deal older the last time I saw you; your hair was then as white as my own.

DUDDY. Oh, I've limbered up a bit, your reverence.

BRIAN. You have indeed, a great deal. And you look more prosperous, I think. Is it true you've bought Dunmore house and lands?

DUDDY. Yes, your reverence. 'Twas in the market, and I'd the money, and nobody else wanted it.

BRIAN. Would it be impertinent to ask what you paid for it?

DUDDY. Not a bit, Father. I paid seven thousand pounds for it.

BRIAN. Seven thousand pounds!

DUDDY. Of course I hadn't all the money . . . I only put down five thousand.

BRIAN. Five thousand pounds! My dear friend, even five thousand pounds is a great deal of money. Would it be impertinent to ask how you amassed so much wealth in this glen?

DUDDY [*pause*]. I made a lot of money with war sheep.

BRIAN. Ah, now, Mr. Duddy; you never made all that money in black-faced sheep.

DUDDY [*nettled*]. I don't like to be sharp with a priest. But there's a limit. And you've reached it. How I made money is my own business.

BRIAN. Don't be offended. I've a special reason for asking those pointed questions. As a prison chaplain I met a young man from these parts called Brian Mulvenna. . . .

MRS. M. My God, Father dear, we all knew Brian. . . .

TESS. Whisht, mother.

BRIAN [*to* DUDDY]. You also knew Brian, I think?

DUDDY. Yes, your reverence.

BRIAN. You were present in this house on the night he was wounded and arrested?

DUDDY. I was.

BRIAN. Mulvenna says there was a bag of money—six or seven thousand pounds—disappeared that night.

DUDDY. I see now what you're driving at. [*Hotly*] If Mulvenna says I took his money, he's a liar. Go back to the prison and tell from my mouth he's a liar. And tell him if he lives to come out—I'll stick a graip in him.

BRIAN *takes off his clerical things.*

BRIAN. You can deliver your message to me.

MRS. M. My God, it's Brian Mulvenna.

TESS. Haha, Mike Duddy, you've met your master.

BRIAN [*to* MARK]. Slip out, Mark, and keep an eye for the police. And keep the engine running.

MARK. Don't you be long here. [*He goes*].

DUDDY. Mulvenna, are you accusing me of stealing your dirty money?

BRIAN. I haven't said so. I'm here to investigate. Do you admit being here when the money was stolen?

DUDDY. Was I the only one here? Wasn't Mark Malone and the Moylen family here?

BRIAN. Quite right. I mean to examine them all. But I'll start with you. The others have bought no estates since I was here.

DUDDY. Well, I have—I've bought Dunmore. . . . Go on, now: investigate and be damned to you.

BRIAN. Where did you get five thousand pounds to plank down on Dunmore?

DUDDY. That's my own business. If I took it from you—prove it. It's not for me to prove it.

BRIAN. It's for you to clear yourself. And you'd better do it quickly. I haven't all day to beat about the bush.

DUDDY. How the blazes can I clear myself? Can I take you back over fifty years and tell you how I made it pound by pound?

BRIAN. We needn't go back down the ages. I only want you to explain your movements on the night I was arrested.

DUDDY. I don't mind what happened that night. I was too nervous.

BRIAN. You'd maybe good reason to be nervous. Perhaps we can refresh your memory. [*To* TESS] Tessie, you can tell us what occurred that night?

TESS. I can, Brian, every detail. Mike Duddy was in the kitchen when you were carried in shot, and he sneaked out immediately.

BRIAN. You hear that, Duddy? Is she right?

DUDDY. I didn't " sneak " out—I left the kitchen.

BRIAN. Go on, Tessie. Make it brief.

TESS. You whispered to Mark Malone about the bag in the car. Mother went out to fetch it in. But Mike Duddy had got there first.

BRIAN. Now, Duddy, isn't that plain sailing?

DUDDY [*in desperation*]. Mrs. Moylen, where did you find me after the trouble?

MRS. M. I found you in this room, Mike. You told me you'd never been out of the house.

DUDDY. I tell you the same now. And whoever doesn't like to believe me can go to the flames of . . .

BRIAN. Less noise, Duddy. Your big noise will neither frighten nor convince me. If you didn't steal it, how did you make a pot of money in this poverty-stricken, depopulated glen? That's what I want to know.

DUDDY. Aye, and, by heavens, you will know! I can afford now to tell the whole glen. I've all the money I want. I made it—thousands of pounds, and lost thousands—in Mountain Dew. Captain Gawson and me handled it in oceans. He killed himself drinking, and I mortgaged his estate. I let the weaklings and topers—like Henry Moylen—drink it and work for me day and night. That's how I made my money. I could buy another Dunmore to-morrow and pay for it . . .

MARK *bursts in.*

MARK. Brian, there's a car coming up the glen like a streak. A police car.

BRIAN. Can we get out of its way?

MARK. No. My old bus is too slow.

BRIAN. Well, slip out and stop the engine.

Sit down on the footboard and light a cigarette. If it's police tell them you picked me up down at the chapel. My name is Father Donnelly, P.P., Dundalk.

MARK. Right! [*Goes out lighting a cigarette.*]

BRIAN [*resuming clerical garb*]. Now listen, Duddy, here's the test. If you're an innocent man you'll help me to bluff the police; if you're guilty you'll give me away.

DUDDY. You've branded me as a thief, sir. And so've these varlets of women.

BRIAN. I still think you took the money. If I'm right, you won't mind being an informer to boot.

TESS. You ought to make a fight for it, Brian.

BRIAN. Yes, and maybe get you all shot up.

MARK [*in the doorway*]. It's police, Brian. The same two that got you here before. [*To* DUDDY] Listen, Duddy, and don't forget this: if you squeak, as sure as Heaven I'll plug you.

BRIAN. No threats, Mark. Leave it to himself. If Duddy took the money he'll inform, and if he didn't he won't.

DUDDY. If you don't take back your threat, Malone, I'll be damned if I don't give him up—and you too—the minute they come in! I will—if you shoot me to pieces. . . .

MARK. It's all right, Mike. I take it back. . . . [*He goes.*]

DUDDY. Roast you, for a pair of upstarts!

I was an Irishman at large on these mountains before you were born!

MRS. M. Ye were, Michael; and I'd depend my life on the ould mountain-dog.

DUDDY. Me a thief! Me an informer! . . . No man ever called me that before. . . . [*He sits down at the table.*]

BRIAN [*sits down opposite and pours tea*]. You and I'll be talking, Mike, when they come in.

DUDDY. Will we indeed! You're a confident rascal. . . .

BRIAN. It takes it all, Mike. They've left us nothing but our wits to live on. [*To the women*] You women assume pious attitudes and be listening to the priest's conversation.

The women sit down here and there.

TESS. They're coming in.

MRS. M. Whisht, dear . . .

The two POLICEMEN *come in.*

BRIAN. As I was saying, Mr. Duddy, when I was interrupted, your glens are very peaceful. . . .

1ST P. Hello! here's the little Yank, still here. [*To* ANNA] Any strangers in this house?

ANNA. None but what you see.

1ST P. Your old friend Mulvenna has broke gaol. Has he got here yet?

ANNA. He hasn't showed up yet. If he's got any savvy he won't come my way again. I've got a natural antipathy to robbers.

1ST P. Unfortunately that antipathy doesn't run in the Moylen family. We're going to search the house. And before we begin let me tell all here—if we find Mulvenna and he resists we'll plug him.

ANNA. Quite right, too. [*Rising*] Come along: I'll take you through the house.

1ST P. [*to* NO. 2]. You stay here and let nobody leave the room. [*He goes to the door and shouts*] Come in here, Malone.

MARK *comes in.*

You stop in this room, young man.

MARK. Right, sir!

1ST P. I'll have a look in here first. [*He goes into the room and comes out again.*] Nobody there. [*To* ANNA] Come on, Yank.

He and ANNA *go out.*

2ND P. [*to* DUDDY]. You haven't seen Mulvenna, eh?

DUDDY. No . . . I haven't seen Mulvenna. But I hope you'll soon put your finger on him. There's been peace in this glen since he left it.

2ND P. Who's this clergy?

DUDDY. He's Father Donnelly, P.P., Dundalk.

2ND P. Dundalk? What's he doin' so far from his base?

DUDDY. He can speak for himself.

BRIAN. I'm thinking of buying Dunmore House—for a convent.

2ND P. Well, forget it. [*To* DUDDY] Don't you sell it. We want no more nunneries here. We've far too many already.

DUDDY. If I get a good price they can start whatever they like in it—a sogers' barrack if they like.

BRIAN [*with a mellow smile*]. You'd rather see another still working, my friend?

2ND P. I'd rather see the divil than a nunnery. I don't believe in young women crimpin' and fastin'. . . . It's again' all common sense.

BRIAN. It's a teaching order would be coming: to teach little children gentle manners, in the hope that in God's good time they might help to civilise people like you.

2ND P. They'll not be here. A nest o' Popery in Dunmore house—not likely! We'll see to that.

BRIAN. Time will tell. God bless you, my friend. You have a rough tongue, but a kind heart.

2ND P. And you've a smooth tongue but a crafty face. When are you goin' back to Dundalk?

BRIAN. To-night.

MARK. Will you give me a permit to drive him . . . ?

2ND P. Ask my chum. It's him has charge o' the permits. [*To* DUDDY] Mind, if you sell

Dunmore for a nunnery . . . well, you know what'll happen.

DUDDY. If it's burnt down I can't help that. I'll sell it for a nunnery if I get my price. . . .

1ST POLICEMAN *and* ANNA *come in.*

1ST P. Our man's not in the house. . . . I want to tell all present—there's a thousand pounds of a reward for Brian Mulvenna. You can earn it with a postcard, and no names named.

BRIAN. Mr. Duddy, there's a chance for you to make a little easy money.

DUDDY. It is. And I don't care who hears me saying it: if Brian Mulvenna puts a foot in this glen, I'll give him up.

MARK. Same here. I'd give him up for a fiver, let alone a thousand.

1ST P. And there's a reward of five hundred pounds—offered by the Bank—for the return of the bag . . . [*He stops abruptly and looks at* BRIAN] Who's this priest?

2ND P. I've questioned him. He's a Mister Donnelly, P.P., Dundalk.

1ST P. Dundalk? What's he doing here?

2ND P. He's after Dunmore house—to make a nunnery of.

1ST P. But what's he doing here—in Moylen's? This isn't Dunmore house.

DUDDY. He came over after me, sir. He

called first at our place, but I was over here.

IST P. [*to* BRIAN]. Stand up and put up your hands!

DUDDY. What are you going to do? Remember he's a priest. And remember I won't let you insult him . . . I've got friends among your superiors. . . .

IST P. I'm going to search him. . . .

BRIAN [*rising*]. It's all right, Mr. Duddy. The officer is only doing his duty. He'll find nothing on me but a prayer-book and a letter from my bishop.

IST POLICEMAN *goes through* BRIAN'S *pockets*.

IST P. [*takes out the letter and prayer-book*]. I think you're all right. Sit down.

BRIAN. Thank you. [*Sits.*]

IST P. [*returning the letter*]. It's from his Bishop all right.

2ND P. I knew he was O.K. . . . He's goin' back to Dundalk right away. Will you give this fella Malone a permit to drive him?

IST P. [*to* MARK]. Haven't you got a permit?

MARK. Yes, but not to cross the Border.

IST P. [*takes out a card and signs it*]. Remember that's only good for one trip. Hand it to me when you come back.

MARK. Thanks. If anyone stops me on the road I'll 'phone you.

IST P. Nobody'll stop you. [*To* NO. 2]

Come on. We'll go round to his own glen. I told you Mulvenna wouldn't be here. He's not a fool. [*They go out.*]

MARK. I'll see them off. [*Goes out.*]

BRIAN [*rising*]. Mike, you're a big fellow, and I feel very small. I branded you as a thief, and you've saved my mutton. Thanks, Mike. May you always have a friend in need.

DUDDY [*raising his hand*]. There's my right hand up to heaven. I never was next or near the car that night. I never saw the . . .

BRIAN. Enough, Mike. You're innocent. Say no more.

MARK (*in the doorway*). They're off.

BRIAN. Good! They deserve the Smart Conduct medal. [*Takes off clerical garb.*] Now, Mike Duddy has cleared himself. Does anyone here know anything about that unfortunate bag? It didn't fly away.

MRS. M. I never seen it, Brian.

TESS. Nor I, Brian.

ANNA. Nor I, or I'd have taken it straight to the police.

BRIAN. That leaves you, Mark. What about yourself?

MARK. I've got the bag, Brian. But we'd better leave it where it is.

BRIAN. Go and fetch it here.

MARK. All right. [*He goes.*]

DUDDY. Any jury in the Nine Glens would have convicted me!

MRS. M. To think of Mark Malone having it all the time!

BRIAN. I bet my life he never opened the bag.

ANNA. You can bet your life ten times, and win every time. Mark wouldn't touch stolen money with a barge-pole.

BRIAN [*to* TESS]. I'm going across the Border, Tessie. The friends who got me out of gaol have got me a decent job. Will you come along now, or later?

TESS. I'd like to go now, Brian. I'll go with you anywhere. But you must return that money.

ANNA. Quite right, Tess. You can't begin a new life on stolen money. Go right with him, Tess, and I'll stay at home with mammy.

MARK *comes in with bag.*

MARK [*giving it to* BRIAN]. It's every penny there, Brian. It has been hidden in Moylen's barn ever since . . . I never opened the bag.

BRIAN. You were lucky you didn't touch it, for half the notes are marked. [*Gives bag to* TESS] There you are, Tessie. You can either return it or burn it.

TESS. Come to the room, Brian. I want to speak to you. [*She and* BRIAN *go to the room.*]

MARK [*musing*]. My God, how badly I wanted a little money! And how sorely I was tempted to open that bag. . . .

ANNA [*puts her arms round his neck*]. B'gee, you're my man! I've been looking out for you since I was sixteen. . . . Kiss me, Mark. [*He kisses her.*] We ain't got a dollar to our names, but I feel as rich as all the Rockfellers.

DUDDY [*going*]. Talk about money! Talk about land! But there's no substitute for five-and-twenty.

ANNA. Wait, Mike. You don't leave this house without wishing us luck. . . . Come on now, be a mountain prince.

DUDDY. Well, good luck! Good fortune to you both. My name's clear and I'm single—that's enough for me.

BRIAN *and* TESS *come in.*

BRIAN. Mike Duddy, would you do these people a good turn and at the same time get your mortgage-money? Otherwise, with Henry dead, it's a bad investment.

DUDDY. Let me hear it.

BRIAN. Will you return this money to the Bank, and get the reward? Five hundred pounds. You could say you found the bag on the mountain.

DUDDY. I'll do it. Gimme the bag. It'll get me a good name at the Bank. [*Taking the bag.*] I'll get the reward and give Anna the balance.

BRIAN. Thanks, Mike. Good-bye. You'll never see me in this glen again. . . . I hope they'll burn down your white elephant.

DUDDY. I hope so myself. But if they don't, I can keep it. [*Going*] It's a good safe place for wholesaling Mountain Dew. [*Goes out.*]

BRIAN. Congratulations, Mark. You've got a nice, snappy little wife, but far too upright.

MARK. So have you, Brian.

ANNA [*goes to her mother*]. Now, mammy, ain't you happy?

MRS. M. I am, Anna.

ANNA. Same here. For the first time in my life—happy. So happy that I can't believe I'm Anna Moylen. . . . I want to lay down somewhere and cry for about a week.

THE END

"Cartney and Kevney" was first produced at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, on November 29th, 1927, with the following cast:—

DICK CARTNEY	Barry Fitzgerald
MAUD CARTNEY	Eileen Crowe
OLD CARTNEY	Eric Gorman
FELIX KEVNEY	P. J. Carolan
MRS. KEVNEY	Maureen Delany
HARRY KEVNEY	F. J. McCormick
DR. PALMER	Gabriel J. Fallon
PETRIE	Peter Nolan
HARNET	John Stephenson
MISS DENNY	May Craig
DOONEY	Michael J. Dolan

The play produced by Arthur Shiels

CARTNEY AND KEVNEY

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

CHARACTERS

DICK CARTNEY	*An ex-Cashier*
MAUD CARTNEY	*His Wife*
OLD CARTNEY	*His Father*
HARRY KEVNEY	*An ex-Captain*
FELIX KEVNEY	*His Father*
MRS. KEVNEY	*His Mother*
MR. PETRIE	*A Landlord*
MR. HARNET	*A Mill-owner*
MISS DENNY	*A Teacher*
DOONEY	*A Servant*
DR. PALMER	

The action throughout takes place in Cartney's sitting-room.

Three days elapse between Acts I and II.

A few hours between Acts II and III.

TIME: *A few years after the war.*

ACT I

Scene: A sitting-room in a detached house at the respectable end of an Irish provincial town. There are two doors: one leads to the hall, the other to a little breakfast-room.

In one corner is a combination desk and bookcase at which CARTNEY *composes his begging letters. The desk is strewn with papers, and among other books are an Irish directory and a large dictionary. In the opposite corner are* KEVNEY'S *drawing-boards on trestles. A small oil-stove, a celery glass, and an empty soda-water siphon are the draftsman's only visible accessories.*

CARTNEY *is preparing his letters for the evening mail. He is thirty-four years of age, with a calm, flabby face, and wears an old dressing-gown and slippers.*

DOONEY *comes in with two cups on a tray. He is an ex-soldier with a flat face and one arm, and wears a maid's apron with bib and tucker.*

DOONEY. Here's a cup av beef-tay, bosso.

You've been working very hard. Take that cup next ye. T'other's for Captain Kevney. The Captain likes a shake more pepper in his.

CARTNEY. Thanks, Dooney. You're very thoughtful. Perhaps Mrs. Cartney'd have some.

DOONEY. She's gotten it, bosso. I took hers up to the nursery. Herself and the childer are playing tag. It does my heart good to see she and them sporting themselves.

CARTNEY. Give her this, Dooney [*a letter*], and tell her to read it very carefully. Tell her I've fifty of those ready for the post.

DOONEY. Right, bosso! Lay it on the tray, for I'm scarce av fists. Dhat's the style.

CARTNEY. And give this other copy to Captain Kevney. Tell him to study it closely and let me know the result.

DOONEY. Right, bosso. . . . Now why don't you get into your big aisy-chair while you're taking your taste av nourishment? 'Twould do you far more good. You look fair fagged out.

CARTNEY. You're right, Dooney, I feel tired. [*Sits and spreads out his legs.*] My stars, this is great comfort!

DOONEY. Dhat'll rest the mind as well as the body. . . . I'll go up now and give the Captain his beef-tay—he's still in bed.

CARTNEY. And then come back to me,

Dooney. I want you to get stamps and post those letters.

DOONEY. Right, bosso. In a jiffy. [*He goes.*]

CARTNEY [*sips his beef-tea till* DOONEY *comes back*]. Dooney, you make delicious beef-tea. It's a perfect luxury.

DOONEY. Trust an ould Fusilier to make a bit av nourishment. Wimmen can cook divil all. They've killed more men wid their rot-gut than fell in the Great War. . . . Stamps ye were saying?

CARTNEY. Yes, we want stamps. Tell me, Dooney: how does our credit stand with the local traders?

DOONEY. I'd say from bad to rotten. The big shops are closed down as tight as a drum, but the small ones are still amenable.

CARTNEY [*severely*]. Then patronise the small shops, absolutely! Remember that, Dooney.

DOONEY. That's what I'm doing, bosso. And I'll do it as long as they let me. But little shops soon get the wind up.

CARTNEY [*goes to the desk*]. I wonder, Dooney, would the postmistress give us five shillings' worth of stamps till next week? I'm completely out of funds.

DOONEY. I don't think as a rule the post office encourages tick. But I can try. Nothing bates a trial.

CARTNEY. The postmistress, you know, was

an old friend of Mrs. Cartney's. In fact, I think they were chums.

DOONEY. Yerra, that's good enough. She can't refuse the stamps for ould times' sake—dhat's if the friendship was ever rale genuine. . . . Here, loose these fliers. I spend my life putting off and on this apron.

CARTNEY [*untying the strings*]. Tell the postmistress that Mr. Cartney was engaged with two strange gentlemen. . . .

DOONEY. I get ye.

CARTNEY. And you saw the letters ready for the post and didn't like to disturb me.

DOONEY. Dhat's the style. A good story's as good as the cash any day. Back in a jiffy.

As DOONEY *goes out* KEVNEY *comes in. He is barely thirty years old, with the look of a fine student who has gone wrong. He wears old flannel pants and a faded smoking-jacket.*

KEVNEY. Sure, you know damn well, Cartney, the post office gives no tick. What's the good of inviting another snub? To've them chits of girls broadcasting it all over the town.

CARTNEY. My stars, Captain, the postmistress is an old friend of Maud's. They were actually chums.

KEVNEY. Oh, that's another story! She can't refuse her chum's husband five bobs' worth of stamps. . . . This letter—is this your new appeal?

CARTNEY. Yes, don't you like it?

KEVNEY. No, I don't half like it. Your old-fashioned begging letter was far more effective. 'Twas literature. But this is beggarly and stupid. You're only wasting time and stamps —if you get stamps—sending that out.

CARTNEY. You'll see, dear Harry. I think by this time I ought to know my business.

KEVNEY [*lights a cigarette*]. I admit, Cartney, you ought to know the public taste. You've lived for seven years on it, and raised a family on it. I suppose you married on it too.

CARTNEY. I mean to send out a thousand of these, Harry, and await the result. If money comes in freely I'll pay the landlord a little, and the shops a little, and restore confidence. Dooney tells me the big shops are emphatically closed.

KEVNEY. Have you stopped looking for work altogether?

CARTNEY. Not quite. Maud makes me answer an occasional advertisement, but nothing ever comes of it. One might as well be an ex-convict as an ex-bank clerk, so far as getting another position of trust is concerned

KEVNEY. Maud's coming downstairs. If I were you I wouldn't let her see that new appeal. . . .

CARTNEY. My stars, I sent her up a copy to the nursery!

KEVNEY. Well, I'm going to make a brew of tea. [*He lights the oil-stove and puts on a small tin kettle.*]

MAUD *comes in, with the letter in her hand. She is aged twenty-eight, handsome, and could still pass for an undergraduate.*

MAUD. It's splendid, Dick! You haven't said a word too much, and you couldn't have said less. Now it's up to the public either to find you employment or give you financial assistance.

CARTNEY. Thanks, dear Maud. Your brother Harry doesn't much like it. He is confusing it with a begging letter.

MAUD. Harry, how could you say such a thing? Doesn't Dick make it perfectly clear that he only wants employment or a loan?

KEVNEY. Ah, good Lord! Dick Cartney's loan: another and a longer name for eternity.

MAUD. What do you mean, Harry? Have you studied the new appeal?

KEVNEY. I've glanced through it. It doesn't demand a great deal of study.

MAUD. What do you see wrong with it? What do you mainly object to in it?

KEVNEY. I object to the flat-footed style of it. . . . It's like a poorhouse funeral.

MAUD. Ah, now I understand! You'd want Dick to say smart things at the expense of truth. But Dick prefers to give only the plain

facts. He's told them in simple terms that he's a wife and three small children, that he lost his position in the bank through jealousy, and has been out of employment for seven years. Those facts require no embellishment.

CARTNEY. Thanks, dear Maud. You've expressed my aims entirely. I've asked my patrons for work, any sort of work, or, failing that, a little financial accommodation until I find employment.

MAUD. Certainly. That's your appeal in a nutshell.

KEVNEY. It isn't Maud you ought to thank, Cartney—it's God for giving you Maud. The ordinary stupid female might have misunderstood you.

DOONEY *comes in with a sheet of stamps.*

DOONEY. Stamps for all here and stamps left. [*Gets apron.*] Here, tie these fliers. The ould Fusilier has a startling bit av news for you.

CARTNEY [*tying apron-strings*]. What news, Dooney?

DOONEY. Didn't you write the other day to Mr. Harnet, up at the paper mills?

CARTNEY. Yes, what of it?

DOONEY. He's coming here to see you. Himself and the landlord were in the post office. They'll be here in a jiffy.

CARTNEY. My stars, such an important announcement! Maud, you remember? You

made me answer Mr. Harnet's advertisement for a cashier.

MAUD [*claps her hands*]. Splendid, Dick! Something told me you'd get that position.

CARTNEY. Don't be too optimistic, dear: we've had so many cruel disappointments. Even a paper miller may want references.

MAUD. References! Isn't a personal interview better than references? What do you say, Harry?

KEVNEY. I quite agree, Maud. A personal interview ought to be sufficient.

MAUD. Now, Dick, take that gown off and put on your grey jacket. And just tell Mr. Harnet you were cashier in the local bank and lost your position through jealousy. Don't put a tooth in it. Those people in the bank want showing up.

CARTNEY. Well, dear, we'll see. But don't expect too much, then we won't be disappointed. I'll put my gown off when I get those letters stamped.

MAUD. Dooney, you keep an eye on the children. I'll stay here with the master.

DOONEY. Right, ma'am.

MAUD. And don't be telling the children war stories with bad words in them. I heard baby yesterday morning say goddam.

DOONEY. Baby never got that word from an ould Fusilier, ma'am. Av that I'm sure and certain. . . .

The front door bell rings.

KEVNEY [*looks out window*]. It's the landlord and a man.

MAUD. Answer the door, Dooney. And show them in here. Be very respectful.

DOONEY. Yes, ma'am. [*He goes.*]

KEVNEY [*picks up oil-stove*]. I'll make my tea in the room. Good luck, Dick! [*He goes.*]

MAUD. My goodness, Dick, you ought to've had on your grey jacket!

CARTNEY. Well, dear, they gave me no notice. I couldn't fly, could I?

MAUD. Don't look so sour, Dick. So much depends on first impressions.

PETRIE *and* HARNET *come in.*

PETRIE. Now, Cartney, this is the chance of your life. Mr. Harnet wants a cashier, and I've told him about you.

HARNET. I got a letter from you, Mr. Cartney.

CARTNEY. Yes, sir. I answered your advertisement.

HARNET. You've been a cashier in a bank, I understand. How did you lose your position?

CARTNEY. I thought I'd made that fairly clear in my letter. Perhaps I expressed myself badly.

HARNET. You referred to petty jealousies.

CARTNEY. Yes, sir: I was really nagged and pin-pricked out of the bank. The whole

trouble was mediocrity versus outstanding ability. I was too clever for them. The clerks were sons of small farmers, and the manager was an intellectual nonentity. All the better-class people insisted upon seeing me and getting my advice on their investments, and, of course, that led to fatal results. A series of false reports were sent in against me, and I was finally asked to resign.

HARNET. When did you lose your position? Recently?

CARTNEY. My stars, no: it's almost seven years.

HARNET. Seven years? And you've been doing absolutely nothing ever since?

CARTNEY. On the contrary, sir, I've been working very hard. Studying and preparing myself for a fresh start in life.

HARNET. But how have you lived? I couldn't have lived on my own fat for half the time.

CARTNEY. But—do you call this living?

HARNET. True. It's pitiful.

PETRIE. That's the word. Pitiful.

HARNET. I'd like, if possible, to help you. Have you any references?

CARTNEY. None, sir.

HARNET. Aren't you a son of Mr. Cartney, the ex-county surveyor?

CARTNEY. Yes, sir; his only child.

HARNET. Since you've no references, perhaps your father would go security . . . ?

CARTNEY. I'm afraid not, sir. You see, I married without his consent, and he hasn't seen or spoken to me since.

HARNET. Mr. Petrie, would you go security for him?

PETRIE. I would not. I'm his landlord.

HARNET. H'm. I see.

MAUD. Mr. Harnet, I'm his wife. I'll go security for my husband.

HARNET. In how much? The sum must be substantial.

MAUD. Of course I've no money of my own, nor property, but I'll take the moral responsibility of backing my husband for any amount.

HARNET. Faith without cash is dead. And it's a pity. . . . By the way, aren't you a daughter of Mr. Felix Kevney, the local seed merchant?

MAUD. Yes, sir. Father's a wealthy man.

HARNET. I know your father. Perhaps he'd act . . . ?

MAUD. Unfortunately he would not. He dislikes my husband intensely, and would rather do him an injury than a good turn. He doesn't understand my husband; he never understood him.

HARNET. Well, without references or suitable security your husband can't be our cashier. That's one point settled. But on account of your family connection I might be

able to make room for him in the lower office. Could I have a private word with you, Mrs. Cartney?

MAUD. Yes, sir; please come this way. [*They go to the hall.*]

PETRIE [*exploding*]. Now, you blighter, Cartney, you owe me four years' rent! Now's your chance. If you don't take this job I'll not wait to kick you out the door—I'll fling you out the window!

CARTNEY. My stars, can I take the position before it's been offered to me?

PETRIE. You don't want work. You never wanted work. You low, mean, lazy son-of-a-prig, you'd rather beg than work. You've bled me white. You've bled the whole town white. You'd rob Heaven. [*Menacing him.*] Besides four years' rent you owe me sixty pounds of borrowed cash. If you don't take this job and get out of my house—as sure as Heaven, I'll murder you! I will—I'll murder you!

CARTNEY. Calm yourself, Mr. Petrie. If you want to put me out you can do it legally. You won't have to murder me.

PETRIE [*furious*]. You know I can't evict you. You know that very well. The town's that rotten with cheap sentiment. A working man'd have been kicked out years ago. But you mustn't be annoyed. You're such a charming soul. And you've got a nice wife

and three dear little children. [*Loudly*] You miserable parasite, I'll be able for you this time! I'll get you an offer of work, and if you don't take it you'll take my boot. The town can go to the devil.

CARTNEY [*takes out a small handkerchief—one of his wife's*]. I'm sorry, Mr. Petrie. I know I've treated you badly, but I was badly treated myself. [*Sniffing*] I suppose I could have scraped up and paid you the rent if I'd kept it out of the children's mouths. But your own wife—bless her—told me not to dream of paying rent until the children were properly fed. [*Sobs.*] You and your wife were the only friends we had. . . . It's so hard once a man's down to get his head up again. . . .

PETRIE [*mollified*]. There now, dry up! Take this job, no matter a damn what it is, and buckle into it. You're still a young man, and as clever as Satan. If you show even one spunk of decency I won't be hard on you. But you must make a move. You can't sit here rotting rent-free for ever. Brighten up, now, and look your best when Mr. Harnet comes in.

CARTNEY. Thanks, old friend. I'll try and not let you down.

PETRIE. Why the devil don't you burn that old dressing-gown and put on decent clothes? You look like an old midwife.

CARTNEY. If I'd known Mr. Harnet was coming, I'd have been suitably attired.

MAUD *and* HARNET *come in.*

MAUD. Dick, everything's all right. Mr. Harnet's making way for you. Book-keeper.

HARNET. For six months, Mr. Cartney. After that, if you're worthy, we may've something better to offer you.

CARTNEY [*frigidly*]. What about salary, Mr. Harnet?

HARNET. Let me first explain the position. Ours has always been a private firm. But now we're converting it into a limited company, with a view to enlarging our capacity. The old rate of wages still obtains, and will continue for perhaps another month. But under the new régime we hope to raise the salaries of our clerical staff by at least thirty per cent.

CARTNEY. Pardon me, sir; you haven't answered my question. To be brief, how much shall I have for a start?

HARNET. Of course you don't expect us to pay city wages: we couldn't afford that.

CARTNEY. I can't say anything until I know what you propose to pay.

HARNET. Well, the old cashier—he's retiring after forty years' service—had two pounds a week.

CARTNEY. That was a matter for the old cashier. What will the new book-keeper have —that's what I'm trying to elicit?

HARNET [*nettled*]. Listen to me, sir. I'm not

accustomed to being heckled in this manner, especially by an applicant for employment. I came here at the request of an old friend who told me you were a broken man. I know your history, but in spite of it I promised to give you a chance. I still want to give you a chance, but on my own terms. If you come to me your salary for six months will be two pounds a week, with a free house, free light and fuel. Do you accept?

CARTNEY. I must have time to consider it.

HARNET. You can have two minutes. [*Takes out his watch.*]

MAUD. Dick, it isn't a matter of salary. You've said so yourself many times. It's the fresh start that counts.

PETRIE. Quite right. Your feet's on the ladder again, Cartney. Two pounds a week in a village is better than four in a city. You've lit on your feet, man.

CARTNEY. Thanks, Mr. Petrie. I don't think you mind what I light on, if I light out of here.

PETRIE. Anything's better than this. And this won't be getting any better.

MAUD. There's a beautiful lake, Dick, up at the works, and plenty of fishing. You've often said you'd like to go fishing.

CARTNEY. There won't be much time for fishing in that concern, or I'm mistaken.

PETRIE. Won't you've every Sunday to fish?

HARNET [*closing the watch*]. He can have every Sunday and every week-day to fish. . . . Come on, Mr. Petrie. I've never in my life met a more exasperating person. [*He goes.*]

MAUD. Keep him in the hall, Mr. Petrie. I'll speak to Dick.

PETRIE. Keep him in the hall yourself, Mrs. Cartney—I'll speak to Dick.

MAUD. My goodness, we mustn't miss this splendid opening! [*She goes out.*]

PETRIE. Well, roast you, Cartney! I wonder how I kept my hands and feet off you. The like of you refusing two pounds a week and a free house! But you'd rather mooch. You'd rather mooch and pay no rent. [*Shaking his fist*] You'll take that job, Cartney—or take the consequences!

CARTNEY [*stiffly*]. You needn't flare up, Mr. Petrie. I won't be bullied. It isn't only the miserable wages I object to; I don't like the locality. I don't want my children mixing with paper mill-workers.

PETRIE. You and your children'll mix with worse. D'ye hear! The whole tribe of you'll finish up in the workhouse.

CARTNEY. Of the two I'd prefer the workhouse. One meets some intelligent paupers, but paper mill-workers are paupers without intelligence. Anyhow, I'll talk it over with Mrs. Cartney.

PETRIE [*baffled*]. The matter needs no talk-

ing over. Your wife's got her eyes opened at last. She thought you wanted work, but she knows better now. I hope she turns on you and beats the brains out of you. . . . You'll clear out of here, anyhow.

CARTNEY. Certainly. I'll clear out of here—immediately. But that's no reason why I should go and bury myself up at the paper mills.

PETRIE. You can go to blazes if you like—but you'll leave my house. [*He goes out.*]

CARTNEY. Harry! Captain . . . Kevney!

KEVNEY *appears in room doorway, holding a cup of tea and smoking a cigarette.*

KEVNEY. Weren't you a great ass, Cartney, to apply for a job so near home? Sure, you might have known there was a big risk of you getting it.

CARTNEY. 'Twas Maud who made me apply for it, Harry. My stars, wasn't I unfortunate!

KEVNEY. This is all a plot between Petrie and Harnet. They'll offer you this job, and if you don't take it you'll be evicted . . . and the town won't say a word.

CARTNEY. Yes, and maybe lose Maud into the bargain. My stars, such an evil plight—and came out of a blue sky. Harry, suggest something.

KEVNEY. I can't see a gleam of light anywhere, Cartney. On the other hand, I can't believe you're going to work. It seems that

unnatural. You must just watch every move of the enemy, and, if possible, wriggle out.

CARTNEY. I'm positively afraid of Maud. She's so unreasonable. . . .

KEVNEY. She's coming.

As KEVNEY *goes out* MAUD *comes in. Her face is flaming.*

MAUD. Dick Cartney, I can't understand your behaviour. You've treated Mr. Harnet and his offer like mud. What do you mean, anyhow?

CARTNEY. Maud dear, don't talk to me like that. I've trouble enough at the moment without you adding to it. Mr. Petrie has brutally insulted me—called me a pauper, a beggar, and a son-of-a-prig.

MAUD. Leave Mr. Petrie out of it. I want to know just what you mean. I must know. Do you want work, or don't you?

CARTNEY. Of course, dear, I want work—if it's suitable.

MAUD. Anything is—or ought to be—suitable to a man in your condition. But do you want anything? That's the question. The whole town says you're dead lazy. They've been saying it for years. But I always thought you were trying to get a start.

CARTNEY. Maud dear, you're hurting me. Your words stab me like a knife. You know how hard I've tried in the last seven years.

You were all that believed in me. You were all that stood between me and despair—you and the children.

MAUD. Well, now's your chance. You still have me and the children. Will you take this position, or not? Mr. Harnet's waiting in the hall.

CARTNEY. I'll very probably take it, but can't he give me a little time to think it over?

MAUD. You must say yes or no, now. You've so exasperated the man that he won't bend another inch.

CARTNEY. I'm sure it isn't a healthy place —for you and the children. I don't mind about myself.

MAUD. Then don't mind about us. It's all right for me and the children. I know the village—Millvale, electric light and everything.

CARTNEY. What's the population?

MAUD. Two or three hundred.

CARTNEY. Yes, two or three hundred millworkers—half of them illegitimate.

MAUD. If they were all illegitimate—that's got nothing to do with us.

CARTNEY. Is the free house stuck in the heart of the village?

MAUD. No, it's on the outskirts. It was the old cashier's house. Mr. Harnet says it's quite comfortable—hot and cold water and electric light. And near the lake.

CARTNEY. If it's near the lake, then it must be damp. It couldn't be otherwise; and baby has a chest.

MAUD. You leave baby to me. A damp house is better than no house at all. Mr. Petrie has told me—and he means it—that we must get out of here. Our next house will be a damper one—the bare street.

CARTNEY. I don't know what to do, Maud. That's the truth. I'm torn between opposing forces.

MAUD. There's only one thing to do—take the position. It may lead to something better. I'll go and tell Mr. Harnet you accept . . .

CARTNEY. Wait a minute, Maud! For Heaven's sake, don't rush me into it like that. . . . Is there a school?

MAUD. Yes, an excellent school. And, sure, the children aren't going to school here? I'm ashamed to let them out on the street.

CARTNEY. I know the sort of Millvale school—a half-timer's institution. Of course, if that's the sort of education you want to give your three sons. . . .

MAUD. Dick Cartney, have done with this rubbish! Will you take the position—yes, or no?

CARTNEY. Everything is against me. . . . Let me sleep over it, Maud.

MAUD. You've been sleeping over it for

seven years. You've slept over it while I lay awake over it. Yes or no, now?

CARTNEY. Would Mr. Harnet not give me a few hours to get in touch with my father? I could send Dooney out to father with an urgent letter.

MAUD. And your father would kick Dooney and your letter away from his door. He's done it before.

CARTNEY. Well, I know I'm changing my own destiny, and maybe that of my progeny. Probably starting a new race of paper mill-workers. But one can't battle against the fates. . . .

PETRIE *speaks in.*

PETRIE. Mr. Harnet wants your answer!

CARTNEY. Three minutes more, Mr. Petrie. I'm making my final decision.

PETRIE. Well, three minutes. Another moment and Mr. Harnet'll go away. [*He disappears.*]

CARTNEY. I accept, Maud. If it turns out badly—which it will—you know who to blame.

MAUD. It'll turn out very badly if it isn't better than this.

CARTNEY. Give me a kiss, Maud. You've been very severe.

MAUD. I'll kiss you up at the paper mills—not till then. You've vexed me, Dick, the way you treated Mr. Harnet.

CARTNEY. Well, that's all over now. I'll let Mr. Harnet see before six months—or six weeks—that my place is not in a subordinate position, but at the head of the new company.

MAUD. Oh, Dick, do talk like that! It puts new life into me. . . .

CARTNEY. I wasn't going to fall on my knees and beg of Mr. Harnet to give me a job. I wanted to let him see that a man, though poor, can be independent.

MAUD. Dick dear, you were right. I see it all now. You were right to stand a little on your dignity. . . . Now I'll go and tell him you accept. The three minutes are up.

CARTNEY [*talking against time*]. Nonsense. I'll tell you when the time's up. I'm not going to miss this opening, nor is he going to miss me. Why did Harnet come here all the way from Millvale to interview me? Is it not the usual thing for the applicant to go hat in hand to the employer? He came here because he's heard of my executive ability. He probably wants me to finance the new company. [*With a flourish*] Well, he's secured my services. But I think he got a little surprise too. Instead of a broken reed he found a man of chill dignity. I may've other surprises in store for him before six months.

MAUD. Here, Dick, you deserve it. [*She kisses him.*] You're simply splendid.

They are kissing when PETRIE *puts his head in.*

PETRIE. Ah, Moses, she's kissing him! That's what's ruined him. If you're done flirting, Mr. Harnet's going.

MAUD. Wait, Mr. Petrie. Dick has accepted.

CARTNEY [*turns away*]. Millvale!

PETRIE *and* HARNET *come in.*

HARNET [*icily*]. You're coming on my terms?

CARTNEY [*meekly*]. Yes, sir.

HARNET. Well, my car's in the local garage. I'll be back here in ten or fifteen minutes. Be ready to come along.

CARTNEY. Ah, Mr. Harnet, sir! have some humanity.

HARNET. What's the matter? Can't you pack your bag in fifteen minutes? I often pack mine in three.

CARTNEY [*shaking*]. But—but—where am I going, sir? Where, where am I going to stay to-night?

HARNET. You're coming with me to Millvale. The distance from here is ten miles, or fifteen minutes by motor. You'll sleep in the manager's house to-night and start work to-morrow morning. I'll send down a lorry to-morrow for your furniture and a car for the family. Is that all clear?

PETRIE. Splendid! The remove won't cost you a penny, Cartney.

MAUD. It's a good arrangement, Dick.

CARTNEY. Maud . . . speak to Mr. Harnet yourself. I haven't got the nerve. Beseech of him to let me wait and go to-morrow with the furniture.

HARNET. You're coming with me now or not at all. We're in the middle of our alterations, and working short-handed. Every minute counts.

MAUD. All right, Mr. Harnet. Please call with the car. He'll be ready to go with you. . . . I'll see you to the door.

She and HARNET *go out.*

PETRIE. Now, Cartney, I don't want to pile it on. Just one word—are you going?

CARTNEY. Yes, I'm going—but under the strongest possible protest.

PETRIE. That's all right. I don't care if you raise the stones to protest if you clear out. If you don't go, I'll find a means of shifting you. [*He goes.*]

CARTNEY. Harry! Harry!

KEVNEY *comes in.*

KEVNEY. What's wrong, Cartney?

CARTNEY. It's transportation, Harry! It's the old press gang back again. Whipped away in a motor without a moment's notice. . . .

Oh, my stars, such merciless treatment! Harry, do something. Suggest something. Don't let this outrage be carried out under your very nose.

KEVNEY. Too late, Cartney. Your position is hopeless. I listened to Maud and you discussing it point by point, and she left you without a leg to stand on. Maud's thoroughly awake at last.

CARTNEY. Yes, thoroughly awake. She has lost faith in me. Harry, this is a horrible ending. Going to be a mill-worker. [*Loudly*] Richard Gerald Joseph Cartney, a paper mill-worker! Judgment of God, how has this poor mortal offended you!

KEVNEY. Don't shout, Cartney. You must use your wits instead of your lungs. For the moment things look rather black. You must either go to work or confess that you don't want work. Either course is rotten, especially the latter.

CARTNEY. Yes, I'm trapped; caught by the two feet. In my shoes, Harry, what would you do?

KEVNEY. I'd go for the motor run, anyhow. It's only ten miles back, and a good road. You could be home again before dark.

CARTNEY. But, Harry, I'm afraid to go. Physically afraid. I haven't been out the front door for over five years. Think of me arriving at Millvale in a motor-car. All those greasy

mill-workers staring at me, and the village dogs barking at me. I can't face it, Harry.

KEVNEY. I know, it's damnable. But you've either got to face Millvale or face Maud. Of the two, I'd prefer Millvale.

CARTNEY [*whimpering*]. Lord, is it possible that I'm leaving here in a few minutes' time? Even a condemned criminal is given a little respite, but with me sentence and execution are simultaneous. . . . Harry, get me a drink. If Harnet smelt raw whiskey he might turn me down. . . .

MAUD *comes in, with a grey jacket and vest, hat, shoes, and gloves.*

MAUD. Get these on, Dick. Dooney's packing your bag.

CARTNEY. Harry!

MAUD. Let Harry mind his own business. He'll soon be packing his own bag . . . the sooner the better.

KEVNEY. I'll see you before you go, Dick. [*He goes.*]

MAUD. Take your gown off and put on this vest.

CARTNEY. I'll go upstairs and dress.

MAUD. You'll dress here. If you went upstairs you wouldn't be down in time. The car'll be here in a few minutes, and Mr. Harnet won't wait.

CARTNEY. My heart's breaking, Maud. I'm

the unhappiest mortal at this moment on the face of the earth.

MAUD. Once we get settled in our new home you'll be quite happy. . . .

CARTNEY. Never! I'll never taste happiness again. It's no use shutting our eyes to it. We're going into white slavery. That man's a born slave-driver. Wouldn't even let me wait and go to-morrow with the furniture.

MAUD. Now you'll talk on till the car comes. Or perhaps that's what you're aiming at. But I'm determined to make you go. Or I'll go myself. I've kept a set of books before.

DOONEY [*speaks in*]. Mrs. Kevney, ma'am.

MAUD. Send mother in here, Dooney.

DOONEY. Right, ma'am. [*He goes.*]

MAUD. Now, Dick: if you go on like this before mother, I'll never speak to you again. I've stuck to you through thick and thin for seven years . . .

CARTNEY. Maud, I'm going. I've only one request: will you get me a little whiskey? It'll make a new man of me. Harry has some in a bottle.

MAUD. Mr. Harnet would smell it. He's death on it.

CARTNEY. I'll chew a clove. It's the last liquor I'll touch, taste, or handle till I'm at the top of the ladder—head of Harnet & Co.

MAUD [*calls*]. Harry!

KEVNEY [*in room doorway*]. What is it, Maud?

MAUD. Could you give Dick a little spirits? Very little, and put lots of water in it.

CARTNEY. A stiff one, Harry. A stiff one. The last request of an old comrade before he mounts the scaffold.

KEVNEY. Just a moment. [*He gets a bottle and glass.*]

MAUD. Quick, now. Mother's coming in.

CARTNEY. [*taking glass*]. Heaven bless you, Harry. And you, Maud. And the children. [*Drinks.*] Now, then, let Harnet come along! I'm ready to meet my Waterloo. [*He takes gown off.*]

KEVNEY. That's the style, Dick. The style is half the battle. [*Goes back to room.*]

MAUD. Hold on, Dick! Put the clove in your mouth.

CARTNEY. Give me my vest. I haven't got a clove.

MAUD. Wait, there's perfume here. [*She gets a bottle and sprays him.*]

CARTNEY. My stars, don't drown me! I detest that cheap perfume. . . . Give me my vest.

MAUD [*sprays vest*]. There. You're all right now.

CARTNEY [*putting on vest*]. Mind, if you're not up at Millvale by to-morrow afternoon, and have the new house ready, I'll take the road for home. I'll try and stick it to-night. But another night without you and the children would turn me grey.

MAUD. I'll be there. I'll have the house ready when you stop work. We'll be in our new quarters to-morrow night.

MRS. KEVNEY *comes in: a good type of business woman, aged sixty, and well dressed.*

MRS. K. I was speaking with Dooney. He's packing a bag.

MAUD. Yes, mother, Dick's got a splendid position. You're getting rid of us at last.

MRS. K. Mr. Petrie was telling your father and me, and I hurried round to hear more of it. Something up at the paper mills, isn't it?

MAUD. Yes, Dick's going as book-keeper for six months, and after that promotion.

MRS. K. But is Dick actually going? Are you, Dick?

CARTNEY. Yes, mother Kevney, Dick's going. In the space of a few minutes Dick shall have gone. Dick has got his chance and he's grabbing it with both hands. . . . Of course I'm the man who didn't want employment. I'm the person who was born lazy. . . . Perhaps this town will now have the decency to reverse its judgment. I'm leaving here at ten minutes' notice without one penny in my pocket.

MAUD. I put a few shillings in your vest pocket, Dick. Do you know how much I've left? One ha'penny. Three children, and one ha'penny.

CARTNEY [*fingering the money in his fob*]. Yes. Thanks, dear. You've never failed me yet.

MRS. K. When do you start work, Dick?

CARTNEY. Either to-night or to-morrow morning. You see, we're revolutionising the whole plant. Changing from a private firm into a limited company. Installing new machinery and doubling our output. All which, of course, means mountains of extra work. And, as the Chief says, every minute counts.

MAUD. It's true, mother. The firm's sending down lorries for the furniture. There's a splendid house ready for us, up at the works.

CARTNEY. You can run up occasionally and see us, mother. It's only a matter of ten miles. I mean, you can visit Maud and the children. I'll probably be working day and night. From this moment I've only one grim purpose in life—to be managing director of Messrs. Harnet & Co. . . . I also hope to've my three sons in the firm.

MRS. K. Oh thank my God to hear all this! It's something these eyes of mine never expected to see. There's a pound, Dick.

CARTNEY. Thanks, mother. Many a pound you gave me in the old days, when I was down and out. [*Puts on jacket and looks round impatiently.*] No word of the car coming? My stars, what's holding the Chief? Or is this how they do things up at Millvale?

DOONEY *comes in with a bag.*

DOONEY. Your travelling-bag, bosso. Packed and labelled.

CARTNEY. Thanks, Dooney. You were always very thoughtful. . . . Maud, what about Dooney? The children are attached to him. Shall we take him with us to Millvale?

MAUD. We'll attend to that later.

CARTNEY. Well, I'll run up to the nursery. It's going to be an ordeal . . . tearing myself away from them.

MAUD. My goodness, Dick, you're not going to India! You'll have the children with you to-morrow night.

CARTNEY. Yes. Well, I'll run up and kiss them. [*He goes.*]

KEVNEY *comes in.*

KEVNEY. Hello, mother!

MRS. K. Hello, son! Isn't this a wonderful thing has come to pass?

KEVNEY. I see nothing very wonderful in it. I always told you Dick was anxious to find employment. And I too am sick of idling. I'm just now applying for a post at fifteen hundred a year. [*He gets an envelope and a stamp at desk.*] Dooney, you'll mail the letter.

DOONEY. Yes, Captain.

KEVNEY. I'm writing it in the room. . . . Mother, could you lend me a pound?

MRS. K. I could not, Harry. Your father's watching me like a fox. My goodness, haven't you a big pension? What do you do with it?

KEVNEY. I don't know. I never seem to draw it. It's always mortgaged for six months ahead. I might as well have no pension. [*Goes back to room.*]

DOONEY. Whisht! I thought I heard a noise upstairs. . . . Mind, there's a back window open in the nursery.

MAUD. Heavens above! Dick's out and away. . . . Run up, Dooney, quickly.

DOONEY. I'd rather not, ma'am. That's a fact. If he's making a last bid for liberty, an ould Fusilier wouldn't have the heart to stop him.

MAUD. I'll go myself. [*She rushes out.*]

MRS. K. Oh, she needn't hurry. She needn't fall upstairs. I knew the way Dick was going to work! He's out and away with my pound in his pocket.

DOONEY. I fear the worst, melady. I never met his fair equal in trickery, and I've met a few slippery lads in the Army.

MRS. K. Listen!

DOONEY. That's Harnet's car at the gate. [*The horn is blown.*] Ah, ye can blow the horn to pieces, for all the new book-keeper cares.

MAUD *comes in.*

MAUD. Yes, he's gone.

MRS. K. And the car's at the gate.

MAUD. I hear it. . . . What's to be done? Could he go over the back fence, Dooney?

DOONEY. He'd squeeze through a very small crack this minute, ma'am, and the fear av death on him.

PETRIE *comes in.*

PETRIE. Where's Cartney? The car's here, and Mr. Harnet's in a hurry.

MAUD. Dick went upstairs, Mr. Petrie, to kiss the children good-bye, and went out a back window.

PETRIE. Well, well, well! After all I've done for that man! And I tried hard to get him this job. . . . Dooney, I'll make it worth your while if you catch him.

DOONEY. Catch him, is it? Begorry, ye might as well try to capture the scent av last year's lilacs.

PETRIE. Mrs. Cartney, you go out and speak to Harnet. Tell him Dick's dressing. Keep him in talk for a few minutes. Your husband's not far away.

MAUD. I hate talking to Mr. Harnet. [*She goes.*]

PETRIE. Now, Dooney, a pound note if you put your finger on him.

MRS. K. And another from me, Dooney.

DOONEY. I know in my heart it isn't right to sell him. Not but he'd sell me for three-ha'-

pence. And he owes me two years' wages at a pound a month.

PETRIE [*gives him money*]. Catch him, Dooney, and have him sent to work.

MRS. K. [*gives him money*]. You'll be doing his wife and children a good turn, Dooney.

DOONEY. Well, I won't give him away. Mind that. But I'd look in the back kitchen. . . .

PETRIE *flings out.*

MRS. K. Is he there, Dooney?

DOONEY. Don't spake to me now. Dhat was a low-down, shameful trick in the ould Fusilier.

MRS. K. You've done him a real service, Dooney.

DOONEY. Dhat's the only redeemin' feature about it—it may be the turnin' pint in his career. . . . But never a word av this to the Captain, or he'd coort-martial me.

MRS. K. Listen!

DOONEY. My sowl, Petrie's nabbed him!

PETRIE *and* CARTNEY *come in.*

PETRIE. Now, Cartney: get your gloves and come on. . . . Get his bag, Dooney.

DOONEY. Hard lines, bosso! Ye made a bould bid for it.

CARTNEY [*fiddling with his glove*]. I wasn't trying to escape. Had I been trying to escape I could be five good miles away.

PETRIE. Mr. Harnet's waiting.

CARTNEY. Well, let him wait. I've had to wait a long time on him—seven years.

MAUD *comes in.*

MAUD. Where did you find him?

PETRIE. In the back kitchen.

MAUD. Dick, you ought to be ashamed of yourself! Mr. Harnet's sitting with his watch in his hand. Aren't you coming?

CARTNEY. I can't get this glove fastened.

MAUD. Let me try.

CARTNEY. Thanks. I'll manage it myself.

HARNET *comes in.*

HARNET. Isn't this man ready?

MAUD. Almost, sir. He's putting on his gloves.

HARNET [*crossing to* CARTNEY]. Are you coming?

CARTNEY. Yes, sir.

HARNET [*in a kinder voice*]. I'm sorry I gave you so little notice, but you rather nettled me. . . . I think you'll find me and my two sons very easy to get along with. Now, let's go. Have you a bag?

CARTNEY [*shaking to pieces*]. Yes, sir.

DOONEY. His bag's here, sir.

HARNET. Give it to me. [*Gets bag, then looks at* CARTNEY.] Why, man, you're actually trembling! What are you afraid of?

CARTNEY. I—I—haven't been out the door, sir, for five years.

KEVNEY *appears in the doorway.*

PETRIE. Come, come, Cartney! Buck up, man!

HARNET. This is the most amazing thing I've ever seen in my life.

CARTNEY. Don't—don't anyone come to the door with me . . . and don't look out the windows after me.

PETRIE. We won't move a finger till the car's at the foot of the street.

CARTNEY. Well, good-bye, Maud. You'll come up to-morrow. [*Kisses her.*]

MAUD. Yes, Dick. I'll pack up to-night.

CARTNEY Good-bye, Harry. [*Shakes hands.*] We may never meet again.

KEVNEY. Cheerio, Dick! The world's the smallest of the planets.

CARTNEY. Good-bye, Dooney. Be kind to the children. They're now almost fatherless.

DOONEY. Good-bye, bosso! As an ould Fusilier I'll do my duty by the orphans.

CARTNEY [*at his meekest*]. Now, Mr. Harnet, you can take me away quietly. . . . Good-bye again, everyone. God bless you all.

PETRIE [*impulsively*]. Good-bye, Cartney! [*Shakes hands and gives him money.*] I forgive and forget everything. Try and make good.

CARTNEY. Thanks, old friend. I'll try and

not let you down. Remember me to your wife. [*To* HARNET] Now, sir, I'm ready.

They go out, CARTNEY *looking back wistfully over his shoulder.*

MAUD [*sniffing*]. Poor soul! . . . 'Twas very short notice.

PETRIE. Now, we're not to move. We promised not to move or go to the windows.

They stand quiet and listen.

MRS. K. Are they off?

KEVNEY. Not yet.

DOONEY. I'm listening for the bang av the car door.

After another pause HARNET *leads* CARTNEY *in, limp.*

HARNET. Dammit all, I can't drag this man away in this condition. The kiddies were upstairs at the front windows. I'm not a monster. [*Throws the bag on the floor.*] You can have three days to pack up your things and settle your little affairs in town. Then I'll send down a couple of lorries and bring the whole outfit up together.

MAUD. Thanks, Mr. Harnet. That's the better way.

HARNET. Are you coming, Petrie? [*Goes out.*]

PETRIE. I'll follow you in a moment. [*He*

hands CARTNEY *a blue envelope*] There's a little present for you, Cartney. [*Goes out.*]

CARTNEY [*hands it to* MAUD]. See what it is, Maud.

MAUD [*takes out a blue paper*]. An ejectment notice!

CARTNEY. Well, dear, it's all right. We're going up to Millvale in three days, all being well. [*He gets his gown and goes to the desk to stamp his letters.*]

Curtain

ACT II

Scene: The same.

CARTNEY *has a boy's tricycle on the table for repairs. He is gazing at it vacantly, and smoking an immense briar pipe.*

CARTNEY. My stars, I wish Dooney would come with the turnscrew! I think I'll take the whole machine apart.

DOONEY *comes in, apron in hand.*

DOONEY. More news, bosso! Here, tie these fliers.

CARTNEY. Give me the turnscrew. My stars, I've been standing here for ages!

DOONEY. Tie these fliers.

CARTNEY [*ties them*]. There. Give me the turnscrew. What on earth kept you?

DOONEY. I was in every hardware shop in the town, and not one of them'd gimme a turnscrew on tick. That's what kept me.

CARTNEY. But, my stars, a small turnscrew is only a twopenny affair.

DOONEY. The smallest turnscrew extant costs fourpence. And I defy you to get fourpence worth of credit in this whole town. Everywhere I turn my face the same question is fired at me: Why didn't he go to work up at the paper mills?

CARTNEY. This is the result of propaganda, Dooney. Petrie wants me out of the house, and the others want me out of the town. Well, I'm not going. I won't be bullied.

DOONEY. D'ye forget this is Coort day?

CARTNEY. No, I remember quite well. But the Court isn't over yet.

DOONEY. The Coort's up and away home an hour ago. I met the lawyers and litigators coming up the street. The landlord's gotten a decree for possession, and Grogan the spirit grocer has gotten a decree agen ye for a hundred pounds—there's news for ye!

CARTNEY. Dooney, this is very serious.

DOONEY. It's the end. I can stick any mortal thing in a house but a bailiff.

CARTNEY. Can the bailiff just walk in and take anything he likes?

DOONEY. That's his job. He just walks in and empties you out.

CARTNEY. But doesn't the Act call for alternative accommodation? Hasn't the landlord got to provide me with as good a house as the one he's putting me out of?

DOONEY. My sowl, that's a good Act! But

it only applies to people who pay the rent. Or who make an effort to pay it. So the Act has nothing to do with you at all.

CARTNEY. Dooney, the situation is very grave. This looks like the final squeeze. Well [*going to desk*], there's only one thing to be done—I must write to father immediately. Can't you ride a bicycle, Dooney?

DOONEY. But where's the bicycle? If I couldn't get a fourpenny turnscrew, who'll gimme a bicycle?

CARTNEY. True. I hadn't thought of that. But, my stars, we can surely find some obliging person who'll take an urgent letter out to father. It's only a matter of five miles, and a splendid road.

DOONEY. It isn't a matter av milage, nor the quality av the road: it's the reception that awaits the courier at the other end.

CARTNEY. But, Dooney, the case is desperate. [*Sits at desk*] I'll write a most pressing letter, anyhow.

DOONEY. Well, " ye can call up spirits from the vasty deep," but will they come?

CARTNEY. Father's morally bound to come, else Providence would smite him. . . . Tell Mrs. Cartney to come here, Dooney. Or wait: don't tell her just yet.

DOONEY [*going*]. Poor thing!

CARTNEY. Dooney!

DOONEY. Yes, bosso?

CARTNEY. Don't let Mrs. Cartney hear you saying " poor thing."

DOONEY. No frights. I was only saying it to myself.

CARTNEY. This is the crash, Dooney. And we must meet it like men.

DOONEY. And like men we'll meet it. Trust an ould Fusilier. In the din av battle he's at his coolest.

CARTNEY. Speak into Captain Harry's room and tell him what has transpired in Court. Tell him the situation is very grave. Tell him, if possible, to come downstairs before Mrs. Cartney.

DOONEY. Right, bosso! If you give the Captain full command, he'll soon clear up the mess.

As DOONEY *goes out* MAUD *comes in.*

MAUD. Any word from Court?

CARTNEY. Not a single word, Maud.

MAUD. The Court business must be over long before this.

CARTNEY. It wasn't over when Dooney was out, and he's only just back. . . . Maud, isn't there a small turnscrew in the house somewhere? The one you had for the sewing-machine.

MAUD. When the news comes from Court let me know at once—instantly.

CARTNEY. Yes, dear.

MAUD. And if mother calls show her straight upstairs.

CARTNEY. Yes, dear.

MAUD. I've very little doubt as to what the news will be, but I may as well wait till it comes. . . .

CARTNEY. Maud dear, don't be over anxious. I've got a strong presentiment that all is not yet lost. The cases may be adjourned for six months. . . .

MAUD. The cases won't be adjourned. Don't be an imbecile! Good Lord, a man with a wife and three children babbling about a turnscrew, and the bailiff on the doorstep! It's in the asylum you ought to be.

CARTNEY. Maud darling, you're annoyed. Otherwise you wouldn't talk to me like that. I'm really grappling with the situation. I'm just commencing a letter to father.

MAUD. That's on a par with the turnscrew. How many letters have you sent your father, and he never acknowledged one of them? Hundreds!

CARTNEY. But this is a grave crisis. If I tell father the bailiff's on the doorstep—my stars, he can't ignore that.

MAUD. Tell him what you like. I don't care a damn what you tell him. I'm going upstairs now to dress the children, and when the news comes from Court let me know instantly. [*She goes.*]

CARTNEY. My stars, such an unreasonable woman! [*He dips the pen and tries to write.*] Perhaps I should wait and see what another hour brings forth. [*Rising*] Yes, I'll defer it. [*He goes to the tricycle and stands fiddling with it.*] Still no turnscrew. Kept idly waiting all the afternoon for a matter of fourpence.

KEVNEY *comes in, rubbing the sleep from his eyes.*

KEVNEY. Dooney has told me all, Cartney. This is the last waltz, with the bailiff playing the fiddle. What did Maud say?

CARTNEY. She doesn't know yet, Harry. I was afraid to tell her. Already she's very much annoyed.

KEVNEY. You're over the parapet, Cartney. [*Lights a stump of a cigarette.*] You're at the end of your rope, as sure as I'm at the end of my cigarettes. Seems to me the end—especially a bad end—always comes at the most awkward time.

CARTNEY. You're independent, Harry: a single man with a pension of three hundred pounds a year. . . .

KEVNEY. I was speaking about the end of a rope, Cartney. 'Twas to my own rope I referred. The pension's going to be stopped, and I haven't a decent rag of clothes to be shipwrecked in.

CARTNEY. Harry! are you serious?

KEVNEY. I never joke about the pension. It's too sacred a thing for levity. [*Gives him a letter.*] Throw your eye over that document.

CARTNEY [*scanning it*]. To attend a special Medical Board to-morrow. What does this mean, Harry?

KEVNEY. It means half a dozen things. It means that I'm having a whole Medical Board all to myself. In other words, some local son-of-a-snake has given me away, and the pension's a goner.

CARTNEY [*returns letter*]. Harry, this is pure and unrelieved disaster. I feel shattered. I can't face this storm alone. Even Maud has failed me in the crisis.

KEVNEY. Yes, Maud's going to quit you. I could have told you that yesterday.

CARTNEY. Going to leave me? Abandon me!

KEVNEY. I suppose it amounts to that. Mother has agreed to take the kiddies and let Maud go to business. And father has agreed to that, on one condition.

CARTNEY. What's the condition, Harry?

KEVNEY. Oh, not a very bright one for you. Father wants to've an interview with you—in a back room—just your two selves—before you leave the town.

CARTNEY. I know what that means. That interview will be my last on earth. Harry dear, you must stand between me and your father. Promise.

KEVNEY. It's no use, Cartney. I might as well promise to stand between you and an express train.

CARTNEY. My stars, this is fatal! I owe your father such a lot of money. He furnished this house, and—and—I've pledged the furniture.

KEVNEY. As sure as Heaven, Cartney, he'll kill you. He'll make jelly of you.

CARTNEY. Harry, suggest something. Do something bold. Take charge of the whole crisis and handle it yourself. You've brains—I've none. You've courage—I've none. You've handled men on the red fields of war—I've never fired a shot. The thought of a glittering bayonet makes my blood run cold. Take full command, Kevney.

KEVNEY. Lord, such a brother-in-law! Cowardice in excelsis! Cartney, you're a psychological curiosity—a degenerate.

CARTNEY. That hurts, Harry. But no matter. We're speaking now confidentially. All I know is that I can't face this storm alone.

KEVNEY. And yet, Maud Kevney, a vigorous young woman with a handsome face and as good a brain as any in Ireland, a first-class mathematician, a King's Medallist in other subjects, was wooed, won, and married by you, Cartney! How do you account for it? I wasn't here when you accomplished the feat.

CARTNEY. I won her by big talk, Harry. You know how a person like me talks to a

female? His mind runs on Red Indians and giants. I wooed Maud like that. Courted her with a dagger. I threatened to slay all my rivals, and they all slunk off. Then Maud adored me.

KEVNEY. And Maud Kevney fell for that rubbish?

CARTNEY. My stars, yes; she liked it. She encouraged me—she called me " her Sheik."

KEVNEY. Ah, help! She called you " her Sheik "? Then why not start and play the Sheik all over again? If you lose Maud you're ruined. If you can hold Maud, you're saved.

CARTNEY. Ah, Harry, I'm afraid Maud's too settled now for sheik stories. She was only nineteen then, you know.

KEVNEY. If she fell for that rubbish at nineteen, she'll fall for it at sixty. Try it, anyhow.

CARTNEY. Yes, I really must do something desperate. But you must help me, Harry. You won't leave me to face the storm alone. I'm in a raging sea of trouble. Will you stand on the bank and let the cruel waters close over me? Will you, Harry?

KEVNEY. No; I'll throw you a life-line, Cartney. You're a poor, miserable parasite, a born freak, but I won't let these people destroy you.

CARTNEY. Oh, thanks, dear Harry! I feel better now. You give one such confidence, Harry. To be near you is like sitting on a

mountain. With you in full command I can defy them all.

KEVNEY. Listen . . . that's like mother coming in.

CARTNEY. Yes, Maud's been expecting her. My stars, this is going to be very unpleasant. Let us be looking at the tricycle.

They are examining the tricycle when MRS. KEVNEY *comes in. She stands watching them, shaking her head sadly.*

KEVNEY. Something wrong inside, Dick.

CARTNEY. Yes, in the works. If we'd a good turnscrew perhaps we could put it right.

KEVNEY. Yes, there appears to be a screw loose somewhere.

MRS. K. Well, well, well! May God help the pair of you.

KEVNEY. Hullo, mother! How do you do? How did you get in? We never heard you coming.

MRS. K. Ah, son, don't talk to me. My heart's broken. Coming down that long, quiet street I thought the very stones were leering at me. It put ten years on me. But rather than let your father come—and he in a raging temper—I came myself. [*Using her handkerchief*] 'Twas like coming to a funeral.

KEVNEY. Now, now, mother, cheer up. This bust-up may be the making of us. We couldn't carry on like this indefinitely.

CARTNEY. Give us another chance, dear mother. We're both in the prime of life. We've turned over a new leaf and vowed to commence life anew. Harry's in full command. Where Harry leads, I follow. Is it not so, Harry?

MRS. K. Ah, don't talk about another chance. How many new lives have you begun in the last seven years? It's hopeless, hopeless!

CARTNEY. But this is the first time Captain Harry has been in full command.

MRS. K. Captain Harry has enough to do to command himself. The only hope for either of you is in separation from one another. His father means now to separate you at any cost. It's on that understanding he's letting me take home Maud and the children.

CARTNEY. What! taking away Maud and the babies? Complete separation from Harry? [*To* KEVNEY] Harry, the storm has burst. I stand alone in its path. Don't leave me to perish.

KEVNEY. I'll stick to you, Cartney, while there's a button on my coat.

MRS. K. Harry, you needn't promise Dick anything. Your father has sworn to separate you, and he means it this time. I could tell you a few things he's done already, and a few more he's going to do, but you'll know all soon enough.

KEVNEY. I know that some local informer has written the Ministry about my pension.

If 'twas father I'll bomb his bone-manure store. Tell him that.

MRS. K. I won't say any more, Harry. But you won't beat your father this time. He's warned the whole town to give you and Dick nothing. And he's watching me so closely that I couldn't bring a few biscuits to Maud and the children. [*Almost in tears*] When I think of it! A girl like Maud Kevney. . . .

KEVNEY. I'll stick to Cartney while there's a shot in my locker! I'll fight till the house falls down about our ears.

MRS. K. In spite of your father?

KEVNEY. Yes, in spite of the devil! My father has interfered in my private affairs. We'll see who's top dog in the end—old Kevney or young Kevney.

CARTNEY [*excited*]. Harry, your hand! My commander, my captain, your hand! [*They shake.*] Kneel down, Harry. We'll register the vow in mother's presence.

Both kneel.

MRS. K. Good Lord! the head's clean gone.

MAUD *comes in and stands looking on.*

CARTNEY. Repeat after me, Harry: To stand or fall together.

KEVNEY. To stand or fall together.

CARTNEY. To present a united front to the enemy.

KEVNEY. To present a united front to the enemy.

CARTNEY. Never to yield.

KEVNEY. Never to yield.

CARTNEY. Till Victory crowns our efforts.

KEVNEY. Till Victory crowns our efforts.

CARTNEY. We swear.

KEVNEY. We swear.

They stand up. CARTNEY *looks almost heroic.*

CARTNEY. There! You know now whether we've begun a new life or not. Whether we're in grim earnest or not. Let the storm roar. We defy it. Decrees? A fig for decrees! Landlord, spirit-grocer, huxters of all denominations—damn the whole lot! They thought to crush me, to break my spirit, to disgrace me. But they reckoned without Kevney. My ally, my commander! [*Expands his chest.*] As giants we await the onslaught.

MAUD. What does this mean?

MRS. K. Heaven only knows. Which of them is mad I can't tell you, but there's insanity in it somewhere.

MAUD. Dick, what's wrong?

CARTNEY [*seizing hold of her*]. You'd leave me! You'd leave a raging lion without a mate and rob him of his whelps—would you? [*She stares at him.*] You won't speak? Then listen to me. The law of the jungle shall prevail. The king of the jungle shall fight with teeth and

claws for his mate. He'll slay, rob, murder, kill, tear in pieces all living things that dare to cross his path! The lioness and her cubs are his alone. His to fight for, to sport with, to provide for. His own, his own! [*His eyes are ablaze and he is pawing* MAUD *wildly.*]

MAUD [*pats his hand*]. There now, dear. Calm yourself. If that's how you feel about your mate and the whelps, they shan't be taken away from you. . . . Mother, it's impossible. I won't go home. I can't leave Dick in this condition.

MRS. K. Well, dear, please yourself. This place is like an asylum.

CARTNEY [*cuffs* MAUD *gently*]. Go to the cubs. All's well.

MAUD. Come upstairs, mother. [*She and* MRS. KEVNEY *go out.*]

CARTNEY [*mops his face*]. Now, Harry, what did you think of that? That's how I won Maud at the first.

KEVNEY. Cartney, you're a rare freak. While pawing Maud you looked like a wild beast.

CARTNEY. But I felt as wild as I looked, Harry. It's no use shamming.

KEVNEY. Sir Galahad was only a Mutt. Give them Tarzan of the Apes every time. [*He shouts*] Dooney!

DOONEY [*in doorway*]. Yes, Captain.

KEVNEY. Go up and search about the bed—and under it—for a cigarette or a butt.

DOONEY. I X-rayed the whole room to find a butt for myself. There's none.

KEVNEY. Then go and tell mother to lend you tuppence and get me a packet. I'll lay my curse on this town the morning I leave it.

DOONEY. You never left much else on it, Captain. [*He goes.*]

KEVNEY. Now, Cartney, I'm taking full command of this crisis. Sit down at the desk and write a letter to your father. The old lad has money, and we want some of it.

CARTNEY. Harry the bold! My stars, I knew you'd grapple with the crisis! [*Sits.*]

KEVNEY. I'll dictate the letter, and deliver it myself.

CARTNEY [*grabs a pen*]. We're saved! Rescued from the bailiff's cruel maw. Ready, Captain.

KEVNEY [*dictating*]. "I won't address you as my dear father, for you've long since abandoned the sacred duties of a parent."

CARTNEY. My stars! What a splendid opening!

KEVNEY [*dictating*]. "When you were a little prig of a surveyor, as consummate a weed as myself, you met my gentle mother—R.I.P. Or, rather, you met her fifteen thousand pounds." . . .

CARTNEY. Ah, Harry, that's very painful to write.

KEVNEY. Very painful to write? Haven't you told me the story a thousand times? Are

you afraid to tell your father to his face what you've told me behind his back? Is that the sort of a lion you are?

CARTNEY [*stiffens up*]. Go on, Captain. Give him the bayonet. I'm set for him.

KEVNEY [*dictating*]. "Mother always told me that I would inherit her money eventually. But after her death, instead of giving me a university education and setting me up as a gentleman, you shoved me into a bank. By putting me in a bank you put me in the way of temptation. For any spills I made you were to blame, and for my dismissal you were accountable."

CARTNEY. My stars, I never heard the case so well stated! Go on, Captain; give him the cold steel.

KEVNEY. "You knew at the time of my dismissal that I had a wife and child, yet you ignored all my appeals for assistance. I've now three children, born and living on the charity of my wife's people. Because I married Miss Kevney, the daughter of a seed and bone-manure merchant, you chose to take offence. But the Kevneys, not you, were the injured party."

CARTNEY. Go on, Captain. Don't spare him.

KEVNEY. "My brother-in-law, Captain Kevney, who served with distinction in the Great War, has been living with us for over three years, and his pension has helped to

keep us alive. But the Captain is going away shortly upon a tour, and I am faced with hunger, destitution, and eviction."

CARTNEY. My stars! Hunger, destitution, and eviction! That ought to move him, Harry.

KEVNEY. "Captain Kevney will deliver this letter himself at your own house, and will discuss with you as to the best means of assisting me. The Kevneys are determined to shift the burden on to your back. If you make me a suitable allowance, I shall continue to live here and give no trouble; if you don't, Captain Kevney will bundle me up and leave me home with you."

CARTNEY. Harry, it's a masterpiece. The threat to leave me home will put terror to him. I underlined it.

KEVNEY. Shove it into an envelope and give it here. I'll go out to Moorfield and deliver it.

CARTNEY [*gives him the letter*]. He won't let you in, Harry.

KEVNEY. Won't he? You bet he will. . . .

MAUD *and* MRS. KEVNEY *come in.*

MRS. K. Harry, your father's coming! For my sake, get out of the way—you and Dick.

MAUD. Go into the room, Dick. Quick!

MRS. K. And you, too, Harry. Do, son.

KEVNEY. Go on, Cartney. Fade out. I'll stay here.

CARTNEY. Remember your solemn oath,

Harry—to protect me from my enemies.

KEVNEY. Go on, Dick. I won't forget.

CARTNEY. Maud, tell your father I'm in bed, very ill. Tell him I collapsed when the news came from Court. . . .

MAUD. Go to the room, I say, and lock the door.

CARTNEY. There's no peace or happiness for me this side of the grave. [*He goes to the room.*]

MRS. K. Harry, son, you mustn't quarrel with your father. You know the temper of him.

KEVNEY. I won't quarrel with him, mother. But I won't jump out the window. . . .

FELIX KEVNEY *comes in. A good type of self-made merchant, sixty-three years old, but looks younger.*

FELIX. Hm! This is a prosperous-looking concern. It's about ready for the bailiff. [*To* MRS. K.] What are you doing round here? Carrying away my substance?

MRS. K. I came round for Maud and the children. But Maud won't come home.

FELIX. She won't? Why not?

MRS. K. Well, poor Dick's in a bad way.

FELIX. Of course it's a great pity of poor Dick. He's made a wonderful effort for her and the children. [*To* MAUD] Where's poor Dick?

MAUD. He doesn't want to see you. He's seeing nobody.

FELIX. I can understand his retiring dis-

position, but I won't take up too much of his time. Where is he?

MRS. K. Now, Felix, you're going to quarrel with him. And what's the good of it? Maud has trouble enough.

FELIX. I want to see Cartney on business. The bailiff's coming here to lift this furniture, and it belongs to me—every stick of it.

MRS. K. And what can Dick do?

FELIX. He can sign this bill in my pocket.

MRS. K. And you'll promise not to interfere with him?

FELIX. I won't give him the basting now, but he'll get it before he leaves the town. The longer I have to wait, the worse 'twill be for him.

MRS. K. Maud, go and call Dick. Your father won't touch him.

MAUD [*calls*]. Dick! Father wants you. Come here.

CARTNEY [*off*]. Never! I know what he wants. . . .

FELIX [*at room door*]. Open this door, sir!

CARTNEY. Harry! Harry!

FELIX. Open the door, I say!

CARTNEY. Never! Go away. . . .

FELIX. Damnation!

He bursts open the door and goes in. CARTNEY *lets up a despairing cry for help.*

MRS. K. Felix! If you abuse him I'll never speak to you again. Never!

MAUD. He'd better not abuse him! [*She looks about for a weapon.*] Harry, how can you sit there?

KEVNEY. All right. Leave them alone.

MRS. K. Don't drag Harry into it, Maud!

FELIX *drags* CARTNEY *in, sobbing and pleading for mercy.*

CARTNEY. Harry. . . . He's hurting me! He has me in a grip of steel. [*He shrieks*] My arm! my arm! you're breaking it. . . .

KEVNEY [*goes across to them*]. Leave Dick alone.

FELIX [*grabs hold of* KEVNEY *with his other hand*]. I can hold the pair of you! By God, I'm sixty-three, but I'll burn a thousand pounds if I can't break you and Cartney like two biscuits!

MRS. K. Harry, son, don't say a word . . . for my sake.

KEVNEY. Not a word, mother. Let him hold the two of us till he tires of it. . . . Don't resist, Cartney. Just let him behave like Barnum.

FELIX *holds them at arm's-length, one in either hand.*

FELIX. Will I bash your two heads together? Will I? Will I bash?

KEVNEY. Suit yourself, Felix. We don't mind what you do.

FELIX. Two bigger prigs' heads were never knocked together! [*He shakes them, then flings them off, one in either direction.* CARTNEY *goes down.*] Damn yez for a pair of lazy scoundrels! I could bate yez by the gross.

MAUD *helps* CARTNEY *to his feet.*

MAUD. Are you hurt?

CARTNEY. Yes, I think I've sprained something.

KEVNEY [*sits*]. You're all right, Cartney. Sign his bill about the furniture, and let him get back to his bone-manure.

FELIX [*spluttering*]. It's better stuff—cleaner stuff—decenter stuff than you and Cartney! The old knackers it's made of did honest work. They didn't write begging letters and prey on the neighbours. They worked while they were able to turn a wheel.

KEVNEY. And they got a fine reward. A nap on the head. If they'd taken things easy they might be alive to-day.

MRS. K. Felix dear, get the bill signed, and don't excite yourself. They're hopeless.

FELIX [*producing the bill*]. Here, Flabby, sign this bill.

CARTNEY [*backs away*]. What am I signing?

FELIX [*following him*]. What is't your business what you're signing? Have you anything to lose?

MRS. K. It's about the furniture, Dick. Sign it.

CARTNEY. But—but—I'm afraid to sign it.

FELIX. Isn't the furniture mine? Didn't I—like a fool—put every stick of it in the house?

CARTNEY. Yes . . . but I was hard up and raised a loan on the furniture. . . .

KEVNEY [*jumps up*]. Well, you blinking idiot! why didn't you keep your mouth shut and sign the bill? [*To* FELIX] 'Twas I made him soak the furniture. I'll pay you for it, some time.

FELIX [*stiff with wrath*]. Who gave you the money on the furniture?

KEVNEY. Grogan.

FELIX. For whiskey?

KEVNEY. No, for tea and sugar.

FELIX. Has Grogan a bill of sale?

KEVNEY. Yes, we signed some instrument....

FELIX [*tearing his hair*]. Well, Lord, Lord, O Lord!

MRS. K. Felix dear, the doctor told you not to excite yourself.

FELIX. Let the doctor go to hell! It's easy for him to talk. He hasn't had Cartney on his nerves for seven years. . . .

DOONEY. [*in the doorway*]. A gentleman to see Mr. Cartney.

KEVNEY. Cartney can't go out. Send him in, Dooney.

DOONEY. Right, Captain! [*He goes.*]

MRS. K. Felix dear, sit down and don't affront yourself.

FELIX. Wait! I'm not finished with you pair yet. I'll rid the country of you. . . .

DR. PALMER *comes in. He is middle-aged, of cosmopolite appearance, and carries a fishing-rod.*

PALMER. My name is Palmer. I'm fishing in this locality. I was told to be sure and call on Mr. Dick Cartney.

CARTNEY [*bows*]. At your service, sir.

PALMER. I was told you'd be able to put me in touch with Captain Henry Kevney.

CARTNEY. He's right here, sir.

PALMER. Hullo, Captain! I was told to be sure and look you up.

KEVNEY. What are you fishing for? News or trout?

PALMER. What do you mean, Captain?

KEVNEY. Come on, don't try to ape Sherlock Holmes. You look too damned stupid. Your fishing-rod wouldn't deceive an Irish hen.

PALMER. Perhaps you're right. Perhaps we'd better come to the point. I'm Colonel Palmer, M.D.

KEVNEY. Well, fire away. I fancy I've seen a colonel before, especially after the war.

PALMER. You've been notified to attend for a special Medical Board to-morrow. Is that right?

KEVNEY. Correct.

PALMER. Well, I may say I'm the Board myself. I didn't like to bring an invalid so far to see me, so I've come here instead to see you.

KEVNEY. And you see me—don't you?

PALMER. Yes, and very pleased to see you looking so fit. Now, sir, let's be frank in this matter. You've been drawing a pension of three hundred pounds a year by sheer fraud. Isn't that true?

KEVNEY. Go on. You're doing the fishing, not me.

PALMER. And I think I've hooked my fish. You've got absolutely no right to a pension, and never had. [*He takes out a file of papers.*] This is your whole army record. Shall I read it?

KEVNEY. Not unless you like. I'll take your word for it.

PALMER. Thanks. You've spared me a very unpleasant task. Your conduct throughout has been a disgrace to the British Army.

KEVNEY. By heavens! that's saying a great deal. I think that deserves a pension.

PALMER. How you managed to obtain a pension—and draw it for more than three years—is beyond all military intelligence. But you look to be clever. Had you applied your gifts in the right direction . . .

KEVNEY. I might have been a colonel—like you. With a string of medals and a wooden sword. I'm sure you know a hell of a lot about cleverness or ability. . . .

PALMER [*nettled*]. Well, I'm here to examine you and report. Will you be examined here and now?

KEVNEY. No, sir. Neither here nor now, nor elsewhere, nor at any other time.

PALMER [*writes in a notebook*]. Any special reason for refusing to be examined?

KEVNEY. Yes, a very special reason.

PALMER. State it, please.

KEVNEY. Because I'm as fit as a blinkin' fiddle.

PALMER. Thanks. I'm glad I wasn't mistaken—that you feel just as well as you look.

KEVNEY. I've had a good time at your expense, and now you can all go to hell—and stay there.

PALMER [*puts up notebook*]. I think that's all. You'll hear from the proper quarter in due course. But I may tell you that your good time at our expense shall cease as from the end of last month. Good-day, Captain.

KEVNEY [*steps between him and the exit*]. Oh no, Colonel. You're not going away like that. You've had your turn with the rod, and now it's my time to fish. Would you mind giving me the name and address of the local informer who has been meddling in my affairs?

PALMER. I'd mind it very much, sir. Get out of my way!

KEVNEY. You haven't studied my record very closely, or you wouldn't order me out

of your way like that. If you don't answer my question, I'll burst one of your jaws.

PALMER. I'll report this matter. . . . [*He tries to pass out.*]

KEVNEY [*stops him*]. Come on! Cough up the information or you won't hear the blinkin' ambulance coming for you!

DOONEY *comes in, armed with a pole.*

DOONEY. Dhat's the style! Storm in, Captain! I'll take him on the flank, and we'll give him a taste av Gallipoli!

PALMER. Hold on. You can have the informer's name. 'Twas your own father, Mr. Felix Kevney.

FELIX [*excited*]. Yes, and I'm here. And I'm not ashamed to own up. The pension was rotting him, soul and body. But I've been writing the Ministry for over two years—and they took no action. . . .

PALMER. I've seen all your letters. You're the first honest Irishman I've ever met, Mr. Kevney, by land, or sea, or air, and I've met thousands of them. On your account I'll overlook this beastly assault; otherwise, I'd have gone straight to the police. Good-bye, sir.

FELIX. Good-bye to you, sir.

KEVNEY. Go on, you blighter! If you'd been in the front line you'd have met decent Irishmen fighting for you. . . .

DOONEY. Step on, then! You're one av them military warriors that fights wid chloroform and a hand-saw. . . . Go'n, or I'll pole ye. [*He drives* PALMER *out.*]

MRS. K. Now, Felix. Come on home, out of this house.

KEVNEY. Leave him alone, mother. I've been called the prize rascal of the British Army, but I wouldn't raise a finger against Felix if he kicked me all over the shop.

FELIX. You've disgraced me in this town—in the town that I started small and made good in. I hate now to walk down the street in daylight. I never see two policemen in the distance but I expect to find you in between them. The town looks on Cartney as a harmless idiot, but on you as a dangerous rascal.

KEVNEY. Well, Cartney and I are at the end of our rope. We admit defeat. What next? What are we going to do?

FELIX. Go to work, the pair of you.

KEVNEY. Right. Can you find us jobs?

FELIX. I can find Cartney a job. You can cross the water and get a job for yourself. I'll buy you a ticket to anywhere.

KEVNEY. When can you place Cartney?

FELIX. To-morrow.

KEVNEY. Good! Now, Cartney, the jig's up. You go wherever you're sent. I'll fend for myself.

DOONEY *comes in, with a long face.*

DOONEY. We're flummoxed. The time Palmer was here Scoot Murphy got in at the back. He's in the kitchen.

MRS. K. Ah, Maud, the bailiff . . . in the kitchen. [*She takes* MAUD *out.*]

DOONEY. 'Twas Grogan sent him. Lord, and I watching for Scoot Murphy wid the pole . . . and he slipped in.

CARTNEY. Ah, Mr. Felix . . . Mr. Felix!

FELIX. What do you want Mr. Felix to do? To choke off the bailiff? Not damned likely. Scoot Murphy's the very machinery we want —him or dynamite. It's hard on seven years since I first tried to shift you, but you're going now.

CARTNEY. Get me something to do. Anything. I'll sweep the streets.

FELIX. Lord, man, it does me good to hear you whining for work. You'll either work now or starve. And you'll leave here tomorrow morning. I'll get you a nice job—a soft, comfortable post, where you'll only have to work like a mule for twelve hours a day—and overtime. [*He goes out grinning.*]

CARTNEY. I must go to Maud. She's upset. Poor Maud . . . and the babies! [*He goes out.*]

KEVNEY [*takes out his pension-book*]. The pension's a goner, Dooney. But I've three vouchers here. They're not matured, and

never will mature, but I want you to work them off. [*He gets a pen and signs the vouchers.*]

DOONEY. This is dangerous work, Captain.

KEVNEY. Not for you, Dooney. You're not supposed to know what you're doing. [*He gives him the vouchers.*] I owe Brady, Kelly, and Duggan—each of them for a bottle of whiskey. Give every one of them a voucher and get the change. If all three bite you'll have thirty quid back with you.

DOONEY. Here, loose these fliers.

KEVNEY [*unties apron-strings*]. I wouldn't take this risk, Captain, only for one thing—I let that Palmer steal a march on you.

KEVNEY. Yes, Dooney, you made a mess of it.

DOONEY. I deserve a severe licking.

As DOONEY *goes out* CARTNEY *comes in.*

CARTNEY. Maud's talking to the bailiff. He's got a blue paper and a cudgel . . . and he won't go away. [*Sobs.*] Harry, will you take me out to my father? I'm sure father'd help me in my evil plight.

KEVNEY. Could we not get your father to come in here?

CARTNEY. Oh, Harry, if you could manage that! I'm sure father'd drive the bailiff away from the door. After all, I'm his own flesh and blood.

PETRIE *and* MISS DENNY *come in. She is aged thirty-four, with a touch of distinction about herself and her clothes.*

PETRIE. Miss Denny, this is the drawing-room, or was; but these people have turned it into a workshop. You can select your own wallpaper, and I'll have the whole house painted and renovated.

MISS D. But, Mr. Petrie, I didn't know you were evicting these people.

PETRIE. I'm not evicting them; they're going.

CARTNEY. Not evicting us! For shame, Mr. Petrie, to say that. Isn't the bailiff in the kitchen—ready to throw my wife and three tender babes out on the street?

PETRIE. Well, damn you, Cartney! There's no limit to your knavery. But you're going. D'ye hear? You're going—should this house stand vacant till the Day of Judgment!

MISS D. I'm sorry, Mr. Petrie. I want a house, but I shouldn't care to have this one. I so detest evictions. [*To* KEVNEY] Harry Kevney, don't you know me?

KEVNEY. I'm afraid I don't. I don't know nice people any more.

MISS D. But I'm not "nice people." I'm an old friend of Maud's. And you—ages ago—gave me some useful drawing lessons. Have you forgotten Nora Denny?

KEVNEY [*shrugs*]. I think I had better say "yes" and have done with it.

MISS D. But why hand me the bird like that? I'm coming back here to teach—drawing mistress in the new Technical School.

CARTNEY. Pardon, Miss Denny. I'm Maud's husband. I've heard Maud speak of you a thousand times, and always with affection.

MISS D. O——h! Dick Cartney—did she marry you? I mean—I mean—and how is Maud?

CARTNEY. Maud's the mother of three beautiful boys, Miss Denny. But I venture to say you won't notice the slightest change in her. Unfortunately, you find us in a little domestic trouble: the bailiff has just come in.

FELIX [*in the doorway*]. Listen, Flabby: I'm going to the 'phone to get you that job. I've told the bailiff to hold his hand and touch nothing till I come back. If you play any tricks in my absence, I'll murder you! [*He disappears and is heard talking to* MAUD *in the hall.*]

MISS D. I hear Maud Kevney's voice! I'm going to see Maud. . . . [*She goes.*]

PETRIE. Now, Cartney, you're set on doing me out of a good tenant. After robbing me right and left you want to do me a final injury.

KEVNEY. Mr. Petrie, may I make a sug-

gestion? If you fall in with it you'll save a lot of unpleasantness.

PETRIE. Well, let's hear it.

KEVNEY. Do you know Dick's father personally?

PETRIE. Yes, intimately. What about him?

KEVNEY. I suggest that you motor out and see him, and if possible bring him in here. Dick's clearing out of here to-morrow morning, my father's getting him a job; but a man with a wife and three kiddies can't make a fresh start without a penny, can he?

PETRIE. No, he can't.

KEVNEY. Well, old Mr. Cartney has lots of money, and during the last seven years he hasn't done a thing for Dick. Don't you think he ought now to come to the rescue?

PETRIE. I quite agree.

KEVNEY. Very well: you go out and explain the position of affairs. If he doesn't do his duty, hand him this letter. It contains a quiet hint from me that I'll bundle Dick up and leave him home with him.

PETRIE. I'll deliver no letter, nor make any threats. But I'll go out and see the old man at once. [*To* CARTNEY] If we raise a little money will you promise to clear out quietly? I'll give five pounds myself, and speak to a few other friends in town.

CARTNEY. Mr. Petrie, your kindness makes

me ashamed of myself. Yes, I'll go away quietly. You won't have to bear the stigma of throwing my little children out on the street. I promise you that, Presentation or no Presentation, I'll go like a lamb.

MAUD *and* MISS DENNY *come in.*

MAUD. Mr. Petrie, father's getting Dick a position. We're leaving here to-morrow. Miss Denny wants a house, and I want her to have this one.

PETRIE. Thank you, Mrs. Cartney.

MISS D. I'll take the house, Mr. Petrie. But we must do something for—for [*she looks at* MAUD]. I'm ashamed to say it, Maud.

MAUD. I understand, Nora. Something for me and the children. But you don't know how much has been done for us already. Dick's been out of work for seven years. . . . It's —it's been one long nightmare. . . .

PETRIE. Now, now, Mrs. Cartney: cheer up. I'm going out to Moorfield to see Dick's father. I'll do all I can for you. We won't let you go away empty-handed.

MAUD [*dries her eyes*]. Come upstairs, Nora, and see the children. [*She and* MISS DENNY *go out.*]

PETRIE [*looks at watch*]. I've got other business to attend to. But I'll run out first and see old Mr. Cartney. [*He goes.*]

KEVNEY. Now, Dick: wasn't that neatly done? To save throwing you on the street,

Petrie'll manipulate your father and get up a Presentation. You're just the sort of person that always gets a Presentation.

CARTNEY. My stars, Harry, you've touched the heights! They may hand me a substantial sum.

KEVNEY. Yes, and once you get the money in your hand you'll pay Petrie his rent, and pay off Grogan, and we'll start all over again.

CARTNEY. Harry the wonderful! My stars, such a born leader of men! You've turned black defeat into shining victory.

DOONEY *comes in, with a long parcel.*

DOONEY. The vouchers went like hot cakes, Captain. I could have cashed a book av them. Yev thirty quid there. And here's a bottle av Brady's extra spacial, wid a double kick in it like a Kansas mule.

KEVNEY. Good man, Dooney! You haven't forgotten your war training. Let's have a drink.

CARTNEY. My stars, this is wonderful! Thirty pounds in hand. Fortune may've tarried, my friends, but she's come at last. They're giving me a Presentation, Dooney.

DOONEY. And what else 'ud they do?—after the time you've laboured in their midst.

CARTNEY. Let us broach the bottle. I'll go and get the tumblers. [*He goes to room.*]

KEVNEY. Now, listen to me, Dooney. That

man has bled me as white as a gander. This is my last chance to get a bit of my own back. You and I must get hold of that Presentation money, and leave them to read Cartney the Address.

DOONEY. B'heavens, b'God, Captain, it's a fine plum entirely! That gives an ould Fusilier a fresh interest in life. . . .

KEVNEY. I hear Maud coming. Take that bottle to the room. . . .

As DOONEY *goes to the room,* MISS DENNY *comes in.*

MISS D. I want to've a little chat with you, Harry. May I?

KEVNEY. Yes, if you don't preach. If you talk about yourself . . .

MISS D. Well, I'll start with myself. I've got some money that I don't particularly need, my father died and left me a couple of thousand pounds, and I'd like to help Maud. Could you take Dick away from here for about a year? To Canada or Australia? 'Twould either kill or cure him, and Maud could stay here with me.

KEVNEY. You're very unselfish, Nora. As you always were. . . . I got the cigarettes and socks you sent me from time to time. I always intended to send you a field postcard.

MISS D. But you always kept putting it off. No matter, Harry, you were always a careless

beast. So long as you got the socks, and knew who knit them, I didn't mind.

KEVNEY. We're in a bad way here, Nora. Cartney's been out of work for seven years, and I've been helping him for over three.

MISS D. I know. But you've reached the end of a dispensation. You must go to work now, both of you.

KEVNEY. The trouble is to find work. There's nothing for us in this country. Could you really afford to let Cartney and me have a little money to make a fresh start? A loan, you know. We'd go to Australia.

MISS D. About how much would you want?

KEVNEY. Oh, four or five hundred pounds. If you could spare us that amount, I'd give you my I.O.U.

MISS D. Rubbish! I don't want your I.O.U. You can have the money to-morrow.

KEVNEY. [*after a sharp mental struggle*]. No, I'll be damned if I do! Pardon me, Nora. I know you don't like swearing. Would you believe it—I was going to rob you?

MISS D. You weren't.

KEVNEY. I was. That was my first impulse —to take your money and have a good time with it. You wouldn't be the first girl I've swindled.

MISS D. Well, why don't you rob me? I'm offering you the money.

KEVNEY. I simply can't do it.

MISS D. Which shows you're not as far down as you thought.

KEVNEY. I'm as far down as I can get—by land. My mind is like a cess-pit. I feel ugly and unclean, but don't give a damn.

MISS D. Nonsense. This is only a phase. . . . But what under Heaven possessed Maud Kevney to marry that man?

KEVNEY. Love, I suppose. Dick says he won her by big talk.

MISS D. Harry, how can you be so terribly cynical? Maud was the dearest girl. I could weep when I think of it.

KEVNEY. And, as the poet says, "All your tears wouldn't wash out a line of it."

MISS D. And three such beautiful children, like three of Titian's baby angels. If she hadn't them she could leave him.

KEVNEY. I wonder. It isn't so easy leaving Cartney. Dick's charm is very potent, devastating. It's like getting used to a big, fat baby, one hates to leave it.

MISS D. Rubbish! The man's super-abominable. I'd poison him.

KEVNEY. Yes, at first you want to poison him. But by degrees he grows on you, till finally you come to like him—a sort of an affectionate disgust. Let me tell you this: there's terrific power in Dick Cartney's weakness. And women like that sort of man. I advise you to watch yourself.

MISS D. Me? What do you mean?

KEVNEY. Oh, I don't mean what you mean. Cartney won't make love to you. He's too lazy. But he'll make love to your money. He's got a real flair for borrowing, or, rather, for inducing people to offer him a loan.

MISS D. He's a bad companion for you, Harry. The man breathes dissipation.

KEVNEY. Cartney can't teach me anything in that line.

MISS D. What ever happened, Harry?

KEVNEY. I went rotten. That's all. Potatoes and onions and other vegetables go rotten, and man.

MISS D. Was it the war?

KEVNEY. No, the poor war's blamed for everything. 'Twas myself. I wasn't the right stuff to begin with, and the war found it out.

MISS D. But, Harry, you must make a fresh start. It's criminal to go on like this. Aren't you going to try again?

KEVNEY [*flippantly*]. Oh yes, surely. I reformed half an hour ago—when I lost the pension. I feel a new world throbbing under my feet.

MISS D. My God! we expected so much of you. . . . When I think of Harry Kevney the student, so full of fire and intelligence. . . .

KEVNEY [*savagely*]. There, chuck it! I don't want a religious old maid's reminiscence! I

can take care of myself, or go to hell in my own way. I won't be rescued like Cartney, or taught to work, or messed about. . . .

MISS D. I'm sorry, Harry. I am indeed. I oughtn't to've stirred up your recollections. [*Going.*] And the religious old maid's going to be married next week. That's why I'm house-hunting. [*She goes.*]

KEVNEY [*raging*]. Dooney!

DOONEY *and* CARTNEY *come in.*

DOONEY. Lord save us! what's wrong, Captain?

KEVNEY. Get me some sort of a coat and hat. . . . G'on, you blighter you! Hop it, or I'll cut the other wing off you.

DOONEY. All right, Captain. All right. [*He goes.*]

CARTNEY. What happened, dear Harry?

KEVNEY. You happened! Do you understand?—you happened!

CARTNEY. My stars, how did I happen?

KEVNEY. The devil only knows, but you happened!

DOONEY *comes in with an old shower-proof coat badly torn, and a battered hat.*

DOONEY. This coat's torn, Captain, since the night av the ball.

KEVNEY. Show it here. It's all right. It's a good coat. [*He puts it on and crushes down the*

hat.] I'm going out now to drink this thirty quid. And Cartney and the bailiff, Petrie and the Presentation, can all go plumb to hell!

He stalks out, leaving CARTNEY *and* DOONEY *agape with astonishment.*

Curtain

ACT III

Scene: The same. The blinds are drawn and the electric light is lit.

CARTNEY *is dozing in an armchair, with his feet resting on another chair.*

DOONEY *comes in.*

DOONEY. Wake up, bosso! Dammit alive, wake up, Harnet's here!

CARTNEY. Harnet?

DOONEY. His car's at the gate. The mistress is letting him in herself. . . . Gimme this chair. [*He drags the chair from under* CARTNEY'S *feet.*]

CARTNEY. For Heaven's sake, don't be so vulgar! You behave like horned cattle. I'm not going to be kicked about by Harnet & Co. . . .

DOONEY. Take an ould Fusilier's tip—get into the room. You're going to be kidnapped agen.

CARTNEY [*rising*]. I wish to Heaven Harnet would stay at home and attend to his paper mills. . . . Where's Harry?

DOONEY. He's drinking in Brady's.

CARTNEY. My stars, such a plight! Everybody has a way of letting me down at the last moment.

DOONEY. Get into the room, I say, or you'll be worse let down.

CARTNEY. I was having a nice sleep, if you'd let me alone. [*He goes to the room.*]

DOONEY [*arranging the chairs*]. Begorry, I might as well be in charge av a monkey-house.

As DOONEY *goes out* MAUD *and* HARNET *come in.*

HARNET. Your father was speaking to me on the 'phone, but we settled nothing. I'd go a long way to oblige Felix Kevney, but I must consider my own firm. My sons won't tolerate intemperance. . . .

MAUD. My husband isn't a drunkard. Besides, on two pounds a week he'd have nothing to drink. If he once got accustomed to hard work and regular hours I believe he'd be all right.

HARNET. My opinion is very different. I know the breed. I've had Cartneys in my employment before—in all departments.

MAUD. The bailiff's in the house.

HARNET. So I understand. I'm very sorry.

FELIX *comes in, panting.*

FELIX. I saw your car coming round the corner, Mr. Harnet.

HARNET. Yes, I thought I'd run down and see if anything could be done. What are we going to do with this man?

FELIX. Give him that job, watch him, and make him work like a horse. If you take Cartney off my nerves, I'll do as much for you in business.

HARNET. The trouble is my own boys. They couldn't—wouldn't—tolerate incompetence.

MAUD. Dick's a good man at figures, and a rapid penman.

FELIX. You must come to the rescue, Mr. Harnet. Try him, and if you can't make him work, I'll take my daughter and her children home and send him about his business. The main thing is to get him out of here.

HARNET [*to* MAUD]. Will you promise to do your very best to make him work and keep him straight?

MAUD. I will, certainly.

FELIX. And if you can't run the house on his wages, Maud, I'll give you a little private assistance—say, a pound a week.

MAUD. Thanks, father. I could manage very well on that. . . . Now, Mr. Harnet, won't you please give him a chance?

HARNET. I suppose I can't do otherwise. Where's your husband?

MAUD. In this room, I think. [*She calls*]

Dick, Mr. Harnet wants to see you. He's giving you the post after all.

CARTNEY *comes in.*

CARTNEY. Mr. Harnet, the time for empty talk is past. I'm sorry now I didn't go with you before. Since then I've tasted the bitter water of eviction. Only the evicted tenant knows what that means. The bailiff sounds the knell of parting hope. [*With a flourish*] But I'm determined to grapple with the situation. Yes. This aimless existence must cease. I want work. Any sort of work. If necessary I'll fire the boiler or sweep the mill-yard. All I want now is to be in harness.

HARNET [*looks the other way*]. The most extraordinary mentality I've ever seen in my life. [*To* MAUD] I can't trust myself to speak to your husband. You can tell him yourself what we've arranged. If you want the lorries to-morrow morning, send me a wire. [*To* FELIX] Are you staying here?

FELIX. No, I'm going in a minute.

HARNET. Well, I'll wait outside. [*He goes.*]

FELIX [*to* MAUD]. Now, get to work. I've seen Grogan and released the furniture. Get it packed up. I've sent you up some packing-cases. Get to work, I say. If your husband cuts any more capers—send for me! [*He goes.*]

MAUD. We're going to Millvale to-morrow morning. We'll pack our things to-night.

CARTNEY. My stars, this is a miracle! That speech of mine settled the matter.

MAUD. I want you to listen to me for one moment.

CARTNEY. Yes, dear Maud. I'm all attention.

MAUD. Mr. Harnet motored down here tonight to say he'd have nothing more to do with you. But father just came in by chance and made him change his mind. But I felt like a beggar-woman asking for a copper. Do you understand that?

CARTNEY. But, dear, there was no necessity for your feeling like that.

MAUD. There was every necessity. The bailiff's in the house, and we've nowhere to go! That was the necessity. But it won't occur again. If you don't want to make a move, I do. If the smallest hitch—the tiniest little hitch—occurs in this arrangement, I'll take my three children and go home to mother.

CARTNEY. My stars, what hitch could possibly occur now? Isn't everything settled?

MAUD. Anything may happen when one's dealing with a person like you. You went out the window before at the last moment. If you'd gone to work then, you'd have spared us being dragged through the Court. Do you know how many people were in the Court today? Three hundred!

CARTNEY. My stars, three hundred people in such a small courthouse! Why, they must have been packed like sardines.

MAUD. I seem to've been stone blind for seven years. But my sight's been restored. I see you now for the first time as others see you, and you're a sorry sight for any young woman.

CARTNEY. Maud darling, you're annoyed. Otherwise, you wouldn't talk to your husband like that. Whatever happens, let us pull together. Here's my offer to restore harmony. You've made certain arrangements with Mr. Harnet, haven't you, dear?

MAUD. Yes, I have.

CARTNEY. Well, for goodness sake, carry them out yourself. Then if any hitch occurs you can't blame me. Just tell me to do this, or that, as you tell the children, and I'll obey you with alacrity. Isn't that fair?

MAUD. Well, I agree. Now we must pack up. We shan't go to bed to-night.

CARTNEY. Right, dear. Whatever you say. If you can go without your natural rest, so can I. But we're both going to feel the effects of it to-morrow.

DOONEY *in the doorway.*

DOONEY. Miss Denny, ma'am.

MAUD. Ask her to come in, Dooney.

DOONEY. Right, ma'am.

DOONEY *shows* MISS DENNY *in*.

MISS D. Maud, I've just seen Mr. Petrie He's been out seeing Dick's father, and old Mr. Cartney's coming in here. . . .

CARTNEY. What! Father coming here? Are you sure, Miss Denny?

MISS D. Yes, quite. Your father's in town at this moment.

CARTNEY. My stars, this is the greatest miracle of all! Father coming here—after an estrangement of seven years.

MAUD. I wish, Nora, you'd been here a few minutes sooner. My own father and Mr. Harnet were here—they've just gone out.

MISS D. I met them in the street and told them old Mr. Cartney was coming, and they said they'd come back here and see him.

MAUD. That was splendid, Nora!

CARTNEY. Something is surely going to be accomplished at last. If all those important people set their minds to it, they can surely settle my destiny. I always advocated a round-table conference. [*Excited*] My stars, I've lived for this! The thought of this moment has kept my face to the breeze for seven weary years. . . . [*Sobs.*] Seven . . . weary . . . years! Miss Denny, you don't know what I've suffered. The world has cleaned its feet on me.

MISS D. [*comforts him*]. Now, now, Dick!

Don't distress yourself. The world cleans its feet on so many. Now, cheer up! I hate to see a man crying.

CARTNEY [*drying his eyes*]. Maud, tell me what to do.

MAUD. Start packing your books and papers. Be busy when those people come in.

CARTNEY [*sniffs*]. I'll go and get a box. [*He goes out, drying his eyes on the skirt of his gown.*]

MISS D. Maud, are you really going to pack up?

MAUD. Yes, dear, we've got to.

MISS D. You know, Maud—I'd hate to intrude. But I'd love to stay and give you a hand. May I?

MAUD. You're as kind as ever, Nora. Of course you'll stay. I'll get you an old overall or something. [*Looking at her intently*] Nora, one little word of advice: never marry. Live your own life, spend your own money, but never marry. Throw vitriol in your own face, and destroy your good looks, rather than attract a man.

MISS D. I don't need vitriol, Maud, the gods made that unnecessary. Nor am I ever likely to marry. Since no man would have me for myself, none shall have me for my salary. Since I came into the two thousand pounds I've had scores of offers, but I wasn't having any. [*Laughs.*] I told Harry I was hitching up

next week, but I fibbed—because he called me a religious old maid.

MAUD. Oh, tell me this, Nora. What were you and Harry talking about?

MISS D. About old times. But Harry got waxy and called me names.

MAUD. You and Harry used to be a lot together, Nora. Were you sweethearts?

MISS D. I'm afraid Harry never gave me the chance. He gave me some useful drawing lessons and an occasional cigarette. That was all. But the hours in his studio used to pass quickly.

MAUD. Were you in love with him, Nora?

MISS D. Perhaps. Or perhaps I was only in love with his work. Harry was fearfully clever with brush or pencil. But he always treated me like a sawdust doll.

MAUD. Oh, you may thank God you missed him! For Harry Kevney's a downright rascal. A heartless rascal.

MISS D. He must have changed. In those days he was perfect.

MAUD. Changed? You'll see presently. He's out now drinking in Brady's. If he comes in drunk—which he will—you'll see what he is now.

MISS D. You may say what you like, Maud. But I admired Harry. And I'm sorry for him. And I'd do anything for him. There!

MAUD. Well, if Harry gets to know that you

liked him, and that your father has left you two thousand pounds—as sure as Heaven he'll rob you and ruin you.

MISS D. Oh no he won't. I'm not a flapper. Anyway, 'twas the pre-war Harry I liked. . . .

CARTNEY *comes in, dragging a small box.*

CARTNEY. This, of course, is only my despatch case—for my private papers.

MAUD. Well, start putting them into it.

CARTNEY. Yes, dear, in a moment . . . when I get my breath.

MAUD. Come on, Nora. I'll get you an overall. [*She and* MISS DENNY *go out.*]

CARTNEY [*drops into an easy-chair*]. I wish to Heaven these people would mind their own business and give me peace! [*Calls*] Dooney! Doon—ey!

DOONEY [*off*]. Coming, bosso! [*He comes in with a packing-case.*] I'm scarce av fists for this job.

CARTNEY. Tell me, Dooney: is this the Day of Judgment? You didn't happen to hear the Last Trumpet, did you?

DOONEY. The Trumpet could be blowing for the last hour and I never hear it—I'm that busy. But, shure enough, it looks like the day av reckonin'—so far as you're concerned.

CARTNEY. They're mustering all their forces against me—horse, foot, and artillery: money

and might have combined to crush one poor creature off the map.

DOONEY. The town thinks you'll wriggle out agen, bosso, even if ye lave your tail in the trap. But I'm doubtful av it. I'm afeered this time you'll walk the plank.

CARTNEY. If the town had stuck to me—like a town—I could have beaten the enemy flat. I could have stayed here in comfort another seven years. But the town has let me down. . . . I say, Dooney: could you slip down to Brady's and tell Captain Harry to come here immediately? Tell him events are moving rapidly, that father's coming in to attend a round-table conference.

DOONEY. I'll slip down after a bit . . .

MAUD *and* MISS DENNY *come in, wearing overalls and mob-caps.*

MAUD. Dick, is this how you're packing your papers?

CARTNEY [*rising*]. I was giving Dooney final instructions.

MAUD. I've already told Dooney what to do. [*To* DOONEY] Go and do it.

DOONEY. Yes, ma'am. [*He goes.*]

CARTNEY. Now for the work! [*Folds back his sleeves.*]

MAUD. And don't be reading everything before you pack it. I know what that would lead to.

CARTNEY. Certainly not, dear.

MAUD. Nora, you and I'll clear this table. Those people may want to use it. [*They clear table and arrange chairs.*]

CARTNEY. I think, ladies, I'll have a smoke. [*Lights pipe, then takes down book.*] I say, Maud, look here. Do you remember it?

MAUD. Yes, *Robinson Crusoe*. What about it.

CARTNEY. You silly girl, don't you remember? We bought it during our honeymoon, and I read aloud every word of it. My stars, what pleasant memories it stirs up. . . . Don't you remember teasing me and calling me "Friday"?

MAUD. Yes, yes; I remember. Hurry now, please. Those people may be in directly.

CARTNEY. Right, dear. [*Takes down another book.*] This is *Treasure Island*. Yes, old friend, you're coming with us—to Millvale. I wish it were to Samoa. [*He takes another book down and peers into it.*] Pardon my keeping you back, Maud. But you and Miss Denny must hear this stanza. [*He reads.*]

"Lightly the breath of the spring wind blows,
Though laden with faint perfume,
'Tis the fragrance rare that the bushman knows,
The scent of the wattle bloom." . . .

That's the life, ladies, that's the life. My stars, I can see the sun chasing the shadows! . . .

MAUD. Dick, you're not going to Australia, to scent the wattle bloom; you're going to Millvale, to work for your wife and three children.

CARTNEY. I know, dear; I understand. I'm going into a paper mill—with a steam whistle blowing me up to work in the morning and back to bed at night.

DOONEY [*in the doorway*]. Mr. Petrie and Mr. Cartney, senior.

MAUD. Show them in here, Dooney.

DOONEY. Right, ma'am. [*He goes.*]

MAUD. Now, Dick, remember my words: one hitch, or sign of evasion, and I'll walk out of your life.

CARTNEY [*like a timid boy*]. Don't let them scold me, Maud. Don't let them abuse me. I'm down and out. . . . Miss Denny, don't let them persecute me. You see—I'm doing my best.

MAUD. I've never in my life spoken to your father, nor he to me; and I won't speak now unless I'm spoken to.

MISS D. Was he never in this house, Maud?

MAUD. Never once.

MISS D. Never saw the children?

MAUD. He probably doesn't known I have any.

CARTNEY *throws himself into a frenzy of packing.* PETRIE *and* OLD CARTNEY *come in.*

OLD C. Well, Mr. Petrie, life's a riddle. I never thought to've set foot in this house. It's more than I could have imagined, even in a bad dream.

PETRIE. You see—Dick has commenced packing.

OLD C. Oh, that means nothing at all. Packing means nothing. In fact, with him it may mean the very opposite of packing.

CARTNEY. I'm going to work to-morrow, father.

OLD C. Don't address yourself to me, sir. Don't dare, or I'll walk out of the house. I'm here as a perfect stranger, at Mr. Petrie's request, and I won't hear one single word from you. Not one.

MRS. KEVNEY *comes in.*

MRS. K. My husband and Mr. Harnet are coming. . . . Maud, take that thing off your head.

MAUD *and* MISS DENNY *remove the mob-caps.*

PETRIE. With all the interested people here we can settle the matter in a few minutes.

OLD C. I'm glad Mr. Harnet is coming. Very glad indeed. If he engages this worthless person he'll do it with his eyes open.

FELIX *and* HARNET *come in.*

HARNET. You here, Mr. Cartney?

OLD C. I'm here for a short time only, and here mainly on your account. I came here out of a sick bed. You'll know my errand presently. [*To* PETRIE] Now, Mr. Petrie, please make your statement.

PETRIE. We may as well sit down.

All except CARTNEY *sit at table.*

Now, Cartney, you're going to get the reward of the eleventh hour. [*Takes out a new notebook*] I've got here a list of promised subscriptions amounting to . . .

HARNET. Pardon me, Mr. Petrie. Would you mind telling me what the money is for?

OLD C. Exactly what I too want to be told.

HARNET. I'm giving this man suitable employment, and removing him and his family free. To place a sum of ready money in his hand is not the way to encourage him to go to work. It may have the contrary effect altogether.

OLD C. Undoubtedly, sir. There can be no question of that. He'll simply take the money and snap his fingers at you. He's done it with me time and again. . . . And what's more, Mr. Harnet, I want you to understand fully what you are doing. The person we are discussing has probably told you a fair story: as a painter he has few equals. But permit me to read a short outline of his history. [*He takes out a paper and adjusts his glasses.*]

PETRIE. Is it good policy, Mr. Cartney, to rake up his past? We want him to forget the past, and face the future with a clean slate.

OLD C. To me it's very painful to refer to it. But I can't allow my old friend, Mr. Harnet, to take this person into his office without knowing all the facts.

CARTNEY. I told Mr. Harnet all about myself at our first interview.

HARNET. If you did I must have forgotten it.

CARTNEY. Well, that isn't my fault, your having a bad memory.

OLD C. Did you tell him that before you were dismissed from the bank your irregularities had cost me seven thousand pounds, disgraced me, and driven me into retirement? Did you tell him that after your dismissal you forged my signature for other large sums, all of which I had to pay? Did you tell him that during the last seven years you've been writing begging letters and living on your wits? Did you tell him . . . ?

HARNET. Tell us no more, Mr. Cartney. I knew your son had a bad record, but I never imagined anything like that. I daren't employ such a man—in any capacity. [*To* FELIX] Did you know all this?

FELIX. I didn't know the extent of it. That's a fearful calendar. I knew his father'd paid a lot of money, but I'd no idea it was so bad as that.

OLD C. Nobody knew all the facts. Nobody but myself. I paid, and paid, and kept quiet. He almost beggared me. And he ruined his Uncle Richard, the first bank manager he served under. Richard had to leave the country.

FELIX. Mr. Cartney, I've said some hard things about you. I apologise. I pity you.

OLD C. Thank you. I made his marriage with your daughter a pretence for cutting him off. But the plain truth is I was in very low water myself. He'd simply robbed me.

KEVNEY *comes in, tipsy and reckless.*

KEVNEY. He that loves the danger shall perish in it. And he that loves safety shall rot in it. That's you, Cartney. You love everything that's soft and cosy. Your flabby face suggests an old easy-chair, an old lounge, an old feather-bed. You're as selfish as a gluttonous baby, and as cunning as an old harlot. You're the living, breathing allegory of Indolence. But we all love you, Cartney.

CARTNEY. They're gibbeting me, Harry. Father has raked me up from the cradle, and Mr. Harnet won't give me employment. [*Sobs.*] They abuse me for being idle, yet no man will employ me. . . . Don't leave me, Harry. Don't leave me at their mercy.

KEVNEY. I'll leave them at *your* mercy, Cartney. And don't be too hard on them. Don't skin them too closely, for you may

need them again. These old men think they have you in the dock, Cartney, but they'll know better before you've done with them.

OLD C. [*to* PETRIE]. Who is this insolent person?

PETRIE. Captain Kevney, his brother-in-law.

OLD C. Oh, indeed! I've heard of him. [*He stares at* KEVNEY.]

KEVNEY. Will you know me again, Old Cartoon?

OLD C. Yes, sir; you're a type of scoundrel not easily forgotten.

KEVNEY. Let me have a good look at you. I want to see at close quarters the father of the Missing Link.

OLD C. Begone, sir! How dare you look at me!

KEVNEY. Don't be too hard on little Dicky. Remember you're his parent, and those anthropoid tricks of his may be inherited from you. If Dick had been a great statesman, or a military genius, you'd have said—" he takes after me." But because he's a great wastrel you'd try to blame it on somebody else. . . .

OLD C. Begone, I say! Another barefaced blackguard!

KEVNEY. Remember what you were yourself, old friend, before his mother took you up and made you a respectable little gentleman. . . .

OLD C. I won't suffer this person . . .

KEVNEY. Sit down. I'm finished with you. I'm going to the room to sew my coat. I was only telling you in a friendly way that you can't make a silk purse, etc., etc. [*He goes.*]

CARTNEY [*breaks down*]. Harry, too, has deserted me. I stand in the dock alone. Not a single friend, but a whole sea of enemies. . . .

He weeps. MAUD *goes to him.*

MAUD. There now, Dick. Don't cry. I'll stick to you now—when everyone is against you. I see my own duty in a flash—to work for you and the children.

CARTNEY [*clinging to her*]. Take me away from here, Maud. These people are killing me. Always trampling on me . . . always blaming me, but never helping me. They give me no credit for having lived seven years from hand to mouth. . . .

MAUD. Never mind, Dick. Let them say what they like, it doesn't matter. I'll take care of you.

KEVNEY *in the doorway.*

KEVNEY. Miss Denny, could you thread a needle for me? My own hand is too shaky. . . .

MISS D. Certainly, I'll thread it for you. [*She goes to the room.*]

MAUD. Mr. Harnet, will you give me the post of book-keeper? I'll take thirty shillings a

week. I've a college education, and understand German and French. You won't regret giving me a start.

HARNET. I'll consider it. This is the most amazing thing I've ever seen in my life.

MRS. K. Maud, you and the children are coming home with me. You're not going to work for Mr. Harnet or anyone else. Get ready.

MAUD. I won't leave Dick. And what's more: I won't have him insulted and browbeaten and kicked about. With all his failings —he's mine. That settles it.

OLD C. [*mollified*]. Richard, are you so utterly helpless as all that? Have you no purpose in life? Are you without hope, aim, or object?

CARTNEY [*meekly*]. I hardly know, father. I'd so like to be a good, worthy man, like you. I never give up hope. Something tells me that one day I'll turn the corner. It will likely be a quick turn and an extreme change of life. I'll then be as strong as I am weak, as wise as I am foolish, as good as I am evil. I don't know when the change will come. But come it must. This blight can't last for ever.

OLD C. Heaven knows. You may yet change for the better. You appear to've got a good wife. This is the first time I've ever seen her face. Only a splendid woman could stand by such a weak, improvident husband. [*To* MAUD] Have you any faith left in this man?

MAUD. Yes, I have. He'll pull himself together yet.

OLD C. You've some children, I presume?

MAUD. Yes, three boys—six, four, and two years old.

OLD C. Well, I'm not a wealthy man, far from it. But of late my circumstances have somewhat improved. I might do one of two things. I could give you and the children something weekly to live on. Or I could take you home with me. I've got a large house in the country, and only one old servant. [*Rising*] Could I have a few private words with you?

MAUD. Yes, sir. Come out to the hall. . . .

CARTNEY [*loudly*]. Hark! the transformation has come! I know it. I feel it. The heart is beating like an anvil, and the pulses are playing a strange tune. [*Rushing across to* OLD CARTNEY] Father, shake hands with a new son, a new man. [*Grabs his hand.*] Your voice has touched the lost chord. Give me one other chance. I'll be a credit to the old name. . . . My stars, I feel emancipated, regenerated, redeemed!

OLD C. [*pause*]. Yes, something must be done for this man. He isn't normal. [*To* MAUD] You're not afraid to live with him, are you?

MAUD. Oh no! He's just a little excited. . . .

CARTNEY. Afraid of me! Maud afraid of me! . . . [*He hugs her.*] My stars, such a

foolish thought! . . . Afraid of me! [*He jigs her round the room.*]

MAUD. Now, Dick, stop it, please. Your father and I are going upstairs.

CARTNEY. Show him the children, Maud. Show him his three grandsons, the eldest called after himself. And make baby stand on his head, till granda sees the makings of an acrobat. . . .

MAUD *and* OLD CARTNEY *go out.*

FELIX [*to* HARNET]. What do you think of it?

HARNET. A nightmare! a nightmare!

MISS DENNY *comes in.*

CARTNEY. Miss Denny, congratulate me. Father has adopted the whole family. There's a father for you!

MISS DENNY. It's a pity you ever left him. [*Sits.*]

CARTNEY. Where's Harry the noble?

KEVNEY *comes in.*

KEVNEY. Haven't you got a pair of scissors, Cartney?

CARTNEY. Yes, dear Harry. [*Gives scissors to* KEVNEY.] Have you heard the wonderful news, Captain?

KEVNEY. Yes, you're going to be a country gentleman. You can do it admirably. You may be a Member of Parliament yet.

CARTNEY. Whatever I may be, Harry, is due to your brilliant leadership.

KEVNEY. Bilge! It's due to your own craft. You wept in the dock and dramatised yourself, and your father, as feeble an old piffler as yourself, fell for it. That's the whole story. I told you you'd draw the wool over them, and you did. . . . Get out of my way, now, or I'll give you a big, fat kick. . . . [*He goes back to the room.*]

MISS D. Dick, you'd better leave Harry alone, or he'll do you an injury.

CARTNEY. My stars, Miss Denny, don't be absurd! Aren't Harry and I sworn brothers? Three years of unruffled friendship.

MISS D. Three precious years lost for ever. That's what is burning into Harry's conscience. You've got no conscience. . . .

MAUD *and* OLD CARTNEY *come in.*

OLD C. Mr. and Mrs. Kevney, I wish to make a short statement. May I speak here, or shall we retire?

FELIX. Speak here, sir.

OLD C. Well, I've already told you I'm not a wealthy man, and why not. A family of five people will strain my resources to the utmost. They'll have enough to eat and to wear. But to educate those three boys—and they must be educated—is entirely out of my power. Your daughter tells me you are blessed with

ample means. If so, will you assist me—when the time comes—to educate the children? I'd like to have them sent to a good boarding school—away from their father's influence. Will you help me?

MRS. K. You will, Felix? You've given Maud nothing yet.

OLD C. He was a wise man to withhold it. I wish I'd been as prudent.

FELIX. Well, I'll give my daughter her portion—invested in her own name; enough to educate the children. [*To* MAUD] But, remember, if you've any more children, you'll educate them yourself.

OLD C. That's satisfactory. I'll do the rest. [*To* PETRIE] Mr. Petrie, you're in possession of your house from this moment.

PETRIE. It's a wonder the shock doesn't kill me.

OLD C. And whoever owns this furniture may dispose of it. My house would hold no more furniture. [*To* CARTNEY] Richard, you'll come home with me to-night, and your family in the morning.

CARTNEY [*lamely*]. Father, couldn't you let me wait and go to-morrow with the family?

OLD C. What's your object in waiting?

CARTNEY. I'd like to spend the last night with Captain Harry. . . .

OLD C. I thought so. And that's my reason for taking you away to-night. You won't spend

another hour in that man's company. Not one. To spare his father and mother's feelings, I'll say no more. . . . Go upstairs now and dress.

MAUD. Come on, Dick. Father's quite right. You've seen enough of Captain Harry. . . .

MISS D. [*jumps up, hotly*]. Maud, it's a shame for you to say that! And a greater shame for Dick's father to say it. One'd think that Harry Kevney was a monster, and Dick Cartney a winged angel! But let me tell you the shoe's on the other foot. Harry Kevney has metal in him—a piece of fine material spoiled in the making. But Cartney's pure shoddy! The incarnation of laziness and futility! Harry, at a loose end, called here for a few minutes—and stayed three years. That's the last phase of his disgusting story—three years with you, Cartney!

MRS. K. God bless you, Nora. Speak up for him.

OLD C. What about the fraudulent pension, young lady?

MISS D. And what about it? If he'd lost a leg or an arm in war they'd have given him a pension and set him up in life. But he lost something more precious than a limb—his soul. When he lost that he lost his other faculties—his love of work, his aim in life. If Harry Kevney could begin again where he

left off he'd want no pension. And you'd never have seen his face, for he wouldn't have paused a moment in the dreary, dissipating, demoralising company of your slobbering son. . . . [*She sits.*]

OLD C. Come along, Richard.

CARTNEY. But, father . . . I must say good-bye to Harry.

OLD C. After you're dressed! Upstairs now. Not another word.

MAUD [*takes his arm*]. Come on, Dick.

MAUD, CARTNEY, *and* OLD CARTNEY *go.*

HARNET [*rising*]. I'm glad, Felix, your daughter and her children have found a good home. I'll be going now.

PETRIE [*rising*]. I'll go too. I've got my house, which is more than ever I expected.

PETRIE *and* HARNET *go out.*

MRS. K. Nora, where is Harry going?

MISS D. He didn't say. But he's going somewhere—to-night.

FELIX. Could you not keep him, Nora?

MISS D. No, I wish I could.

MRS. K. You're better without him, dear.

MISS D. That's all you know. If he'd only let me—I'd go with him.

KEVNEY *comes in. He is sewing his coat with a long awkward thread.*

KEVNEY [*shouts*]. Dooney!

DOONEY [*in the doorway*]. Yes, Captain.

KEVNEY. Run down and tell Fatty Hogan to wind up his Tin Lizzy. Tell him he's got to catch the Channel boat or bust.

DOONEY. Fatty might hesitate, Captain.

KEVNEY. I'll pay at this end, tell him.

DOONEY. Right, Captain. [*He goes.*]

MRS. K. Harry, son, where are you going?

KEVNEY. I'm going to seek my fortune, mother, as they say in stories.

MRS. K. But where are you going to seek it?

KEVNEY. My plans wouldn't interest you. They hardly interest myself. All I know is that I've finished one sordid chapter of my life, and am commencing another. The new chapter has got to be written before it can be read.

MISS D. You're going to put every ounce of the old grit into the new effort, aren't you, Harry?

KEVNEY. I can say nothing. My mental equipment is all rusty and thrown out of gear. I may never be able to use it again. So it's no use making promises.

MISS D. But you're going to make a try anyhow, Harry?

KEVNEY. Yes, I'm flirting with that idea. If I succeed I'll let you know.

MISS D. Couldn't you stay at home and learn to work, Harry? This house is mine.

My God, won't you let me help you that much? You taught me all I know about drawing, and enabled me to earn a good living. Won't you let me pay off a little of my debt?

KEVNEY. What exactly do you mean, Nora?

MISS D. I mean that you can stay here till you've got your bearings again.

KEVNEY. By that time your beautiful character wouldn't be worth tuppence.

MISS D. Rubbish! What do I care about village gossip? You'll stay, Harry! We'll work together for a bit, then you can go away.

KEVNEY. Thanks, Nora. I'd love to. But it can't be done. I must work out my own salvation—or damnation—elsewhere.

MISS D. Well, you're a fool. That's all. I wouldn't ask you to marry me.

KEVNEY. One never knows. Your heart might run away with your head. And you'd live to regret it. I'm thirty, and nothing done. At forty, if I've nothing done—I'll take an ounce of strychnine.

FELIX. You're coming home with me, Harry. I'll rig you out and give you a fresh start. I want to do something in lieu of the pension.

KEVNEY. If you want to help me, leave me alone. Unlike Cartney, I can't be born again. They're putting Cartney back on the bottle, and teething rings, but I've lost my milk teeth once for all.

MRS. K. You can't go away in those clothes, Harry.

KEVNEY. I've other clothes in a trunk in London—if the moths haven't got into them.

MRS. K. O God, soften hard fortune!

KEVNEY. Amen. Cheer up, mother! Sure, I'm as happy as yourself.

MRS. K. That isn't saying much.

DOONEY [*in the doorway*]. Fatty Hogan says he can make the boat, Captain. He's taking three spare wheels. He'll be along in a jiffy.

KEVNEY. Right, Dooney. Get the old kit-bag.

DOONEY. I wish I was getting the ould rifle along wid it! [*He goes.*]

KEVNEY. I wish you were!

MISS D. May I've your drawing-boards, Harry?

KEVNEY. Surely. And there's an etching there—half finished—you can have it too.

The car is heard outside. DOONEY *comes in with the kitbag.*

DOONEY. Fatty's at the gate, Captain.

KEVNEY. Right, Dooney. . . . What about yourself, Dooney? What are you going to do? Will Cartney take you with him to Moorfield?

DOONEY. Let Cartney go to the divil!

KEVNEY. Father, could you give Dooney a job in the store?

FELIX. I'll find him something to do.

KEVNEY. If you put him on his honour he won't steal. But if you try to watch him, he'll help himself. Dooney's job in the war was to forage anything from a hen to a fat pig.

FELIX. There's nothing in my store to steal.

KEVNEY. Well, there's a bit of money, Dooney. And make Cartney pay you your wages.

DOONEY [*salutes*]. My ould Captain! God, I wish we were starting out for Gallipoli!

KEVNEY. You can't expect the same luxury twice, Dooney. . . .

CARTNEY *rushes in. He is fully dressed.* MAUD *and* OLD CARTNEY *come in after him.*

CARTNEY. Am I in time, Harry?

KEVNEY. What for?

CARTNEY. To say farewell.

KEVNEY. You're just a couple of minutes too soon. If you'd waited, I could have been out and away.... But, good-bye, Cartney.... No, don't shake hands with me. I'd break down.

CARTNEY [*whimpering*]. Harry, dear Harry . . . we may never meet again.

KEVNEY. I wish I could be certain of that. But one is sure to meet a Cartney somewhere. You're legion.

OLD C. Come along, sir! Can't you see he despises you, and only wants to insult you before your wife and father!

CARTNEY [*drawing himself up*]. For shame, Harry! You're coming out in your true colours. You're angry and jealous because I've reformed and am going back to my father's house. . . .

KEVNEY. I'm not jealous at all, Cartney. I'd as lief be jealous of a louse. I'm only reflecting on what a fine world it is for parasites to live in. You can marry a wife and live on the public for seven years. Then your father takes you back home by the hand. Your father-in-law offers to educate your children. And your landlord, who never saw the colour of your money, wants to get up a Presentation. . . . Go home, Cartney, and make your mind easy. The curse of Adam will never reach you.

CARTNEY. Come on, father. Under that person's influence, what chance had I to reform?

OLD C. None whatever!

OLD CARTNEY, MAUD, *and* CARTNEY *go.*

DOONEY. And he never mentioned my wages! Two years at a pound a month. And keeping me going round the shops like a beachcomber. . . . By heavens, I'll boord him about it! [*He goes.*]

KEVNEY. Good-bye, mother. I'll be the bright one of the family yet. . . .

MRS. K. Good-bye, son. [*She kisses him.*] Whatever happens, always write me a line.

KEVNEY. I will, surely. [*Shakes hands with* FELIX.] Cheerio, Felix. Sorry for all the trouble. . . . .

FELIX. And what am I?

KEVNEY. Never mind, Felix. Failure is all in the big scheme of things. Nature is very prodigal, you know. "Of fifty seeds, she often brings but one to bear." The rest are thrown as rubbish to the void. With me another shaving might have all the difference. You and mother were too good to breed a contented duffer and barely good enough to breed a winner.

FELIX. Harry, you can't go away in that condition. You're like a tramp. Your three brothers are big men in the world. Sure, you wouldn't want to affront them?

KEVNEY. They don't mind affronting me.

FELIX. How?

KEVNEY. By being successful men, of course.

FELIX. Any one of your brothers would be glad to help you, do any mortal thing for you.

KEVNEY. I know. They're all good fellows. They'd give me their old clothes, and tell me to make myself at home in their houses. . . . [*Shrugs.*] Good-bye, Nora. We kissed in the room, when you were threading the needle. . . .

MISS D. Harry, you're not going! You're in the right mood now to make a fresh start. You've touched the bottom of the Pit, and

now you're coming up again. You must give yourself a chance. You must!

KEVNEY. I'm going away for six months. I'll try my damndest to work. I'll be as hard on myself as possible. . . .

MISS D. Where are you going?

KEVNEY. To London. I know a chap who'll give me a hand. All I want for six months is a half-dark room and a bite to eat.

MISS D. You can have that here. Whatever you're going to do, you'll do it here. I've been called the proudest girl in Ireland, but now I'm going to be the meanest. . . .

KEVNEY. Nora, for Heaven's sake—don't!

MISS D. Yes I will! I'm determined. I'm going to ask you to marry me. . . .

FELIX. Go on, Nora! You'll make a man of him.

MRS. K. Do, Nora!

MISS D. Now, Harry, you can't get out of it. I'm asking you to marry me, and you're too manly to refuse me.

KEVNEY. You're right, Nora. I can't get out of it. But you'll regret it.

MISS D. The old Greek said: "Whether you marry or not, you'll regret it." I'll chance the marrying, anyhow.

DOONEY [*in the doorway.*] Fatty says you'll miss the boat, Captain.

KEVNEY. Just a moment, Dooney. [*To* MISS DENNY] Nora, I've already told you that I

won't be rescued like Cartney, or taught to work, or messed about. I'm going away for six months or a year—to recover a little of my self-respect. At the end of that time—if you still want me—I'll come back and marry you. Do you agree?

MISS D. Will you write?

KEVNEY. Yes, often.

MISS D. Well, Harry, it's a bargain.

KEVNEY. Now, Dooney, get the old kitbag.

DOONEY. Ready, Captain.

KEVNEY. Cheerio! [*He goes out, followed by* DOONEY.]

THE END

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